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LIFE AT COURT IN RAJASTHAN

INDIAN MINIATURES FROM THE SEVENTEENTH TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY ROSA MARIA CIMINO

प्रो० बी०एन० पुरी संग्रह लखनऊ

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MARIO LUCA GIUSTI
FIRENZE

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CESMEO
Centro Piemontese di Studi sul Medio ed Estremo Oriente

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MARIO LUCA GIUSTI
FIRENZE

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From Japan to Tibet and subsequently to India: thus our thrilling itinerary, amidst the rich treasures of Eastern Art, takes us to the land of Rajasthan. Once again is unveiled before us a fascinating world depicted in miniatures which suggest – at times with charming pictorial plays of dazzling mother-of-pearl iridescence – some moments of the court life of the Rajputs. The paintings displayed here can in turn be the reflection of a reality, nay, the idealized representation of the majesty of power, a reminder of unusual pomp or the nostalgic and almost pathetic reminiscence of a world that is no more. However, there is no doubt that in the solemn figuration of the sovereigns, as well as in the modest representation of their collaborators and courtesans, in the scenes of colour, customs and festivals in the gardens of the royal palace, these paintings always appear to be either subtly evoking literary reminders of certain Kautilian precepts or imitating the warm sensuality of the *Sattasai* as well as the passionate outbursts of the *Gītāgovinda*.

The CESMEO is justly proud of having been able to collect together so vast a number of miniatures in an exhibition which is characterized by the organic unity of its themes and which can be recommended for its rare beauty. Thanks to the enthusiastic help of Town Councillors Giovanni Ferrero, Pier Carlo Longo, Marziano Marzano, who made it possible to organize this exhibition, CESMEO can continue to fulfil prestigiously one of its most important and significant institutional aims, that is to promote an ever-increasing knowledge of the East and to contribute towards the furtherance of cultural relations between our country and the countries of Asia.

OSCAR BOTTO
PRESIDENT OF CESMEO

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During my many trips to India, I have always been particularly impressed by the magical atmosphere of Rajasthani palaces, which I subsequently found magnificently reproduced in the miniatures depicting the life at the court of the Maharajas.

Consequently, it was my desire to try to recreate the fascinating charm of those far-away places, with the help of miniatures which conjure up the past splendours of the Rajput courts.

This project of mine was made possible, thanks to the initiative of CESMEO. Prof. Oscar Botto, the President of CESMEO, ably promoted and directed this complex undertaking. I made the most of his advice and experience in the preparation of this work; consequently, I am sincerely grateful to him.

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This exhibition would not have been possible without the valid and constant collaboration of numerous people to whom I should like to express my sincere appreciation: Dr. Robert Skelton, Keeper of the Indian Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum of London, for his invaluable advice and suggestions in a field in which he is one of the foremost authorities; Dr. Andrew Topsfield, an expert in Rajasthani art, and Dr. G.H.R. Tillotson for their valid contributions; Dr. Giorgio Milanetti, for reviewing the terms in the Indian languages, for his help in the compilation of the glossary and in the reading of some of the inscriptions; the architects Maurizio Momo and Beppe Bellezza who, having understood the spirit of the exhibition so well, were able to stage it so effectively; the publisher Mario Luca Giusti, for the elegant edition of the catalogue, Prof. Franco Ricca who attended to the audiovisual side of the exhibition; the photographer, Mr. Francesco Milanesio, who supplied the majority of the slides of the Rajasthani palaces; Miss Betty Tyers of the Victoria and Albert Museum of London for her collaboration.

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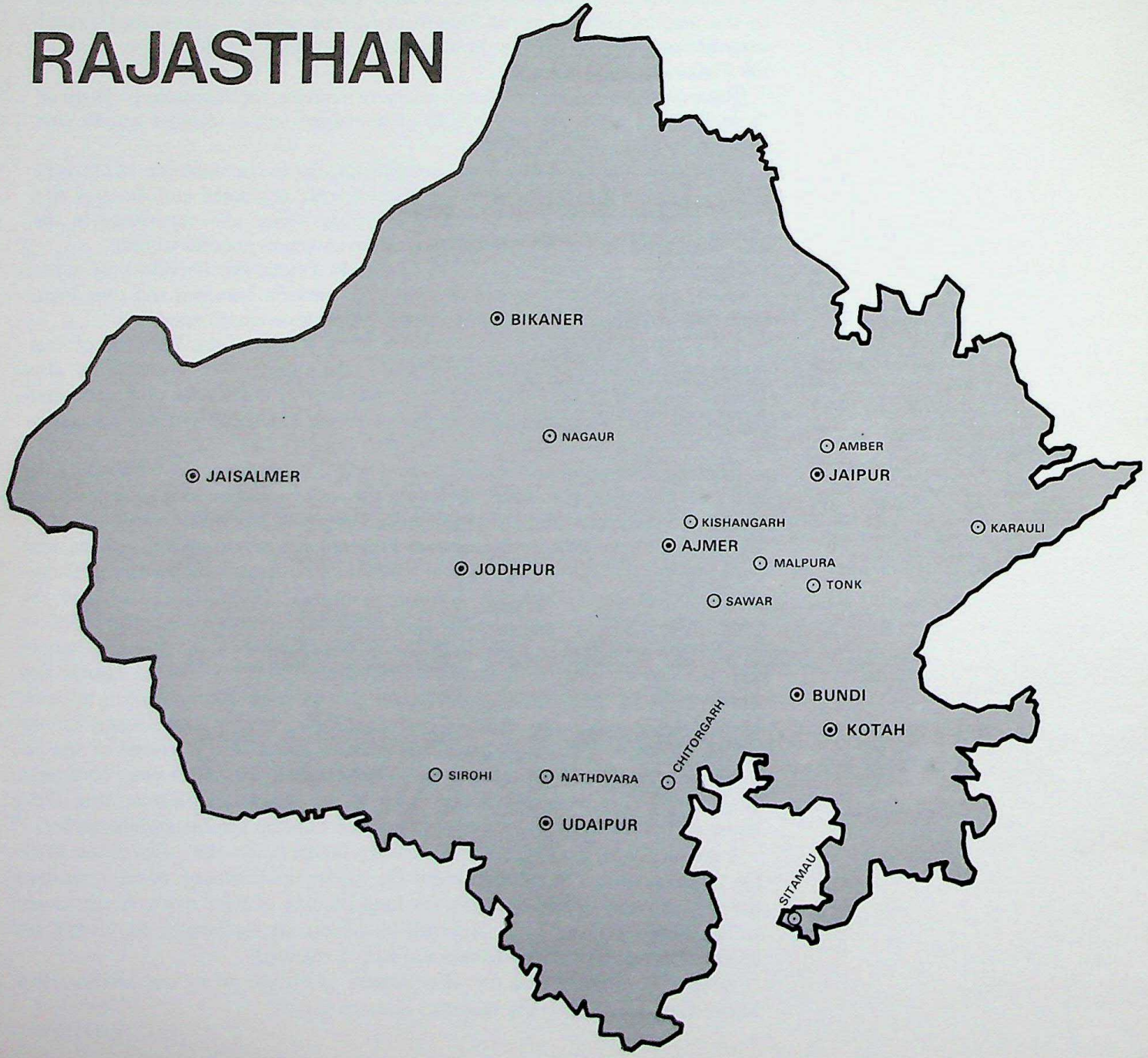

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To my mother

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The transcription of names has been edited by Dr. GIORGIO MILANETTI.

For place names and names of people and dynasties, the current transcription has been followed; for all other names, the scientific transliteration of Sanskrit terms and the scientific transliteration of Hindi terms, whether from Hindi or from one of its dialects, have been adopted.

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Rajasthan is a land of contrasts: vast desert areas alternate with lush forests and wild places, the kingdom of wild beasts; high, steep mountains, rocky plateaus forming deep gorges, overlooked by impregnable fortresses – the scene of turbulent and heroic stories – dominate vast cultivated areas, made fertile by streams and reservoirs, the work of enlightened rulers.

The Aravalli range, with its highest peak, Mt. Abu (1722 m.), the mountain sacred to the Jainas, stretches from north-east to south-west and separates the vast Thar desert from the eastern region; here, minor elevations, plateaus, gorges and hills make for a varied landscape. There are several rivers, such as the Chambal, a tributary of the Jamuna, which flows through the town of Kotah; the Banas, which flows through Mewar and joins the Chambal; the Luni, a salty river rising from Lake Pushkar, which flows through Marwar and into the Kutch depression. Large reservoirs, such as the Jaisamand and Rajsamand, allow for the irrigation of many areas even during the drought period, which is very long in these regions; the rains, which are never plentiful, not even during the monsoon period, only affect the central and eastern area of Rajasthan.

The Rajputs, a warlike race, possibly of Scythian or Central-Asian origin, belong to the caste of warriors (*Kṣatriya*) [1]. Just like our knights in the Middle Ages or the Japanese *samurai*, they followed a strict code of chivalry which compelled them not only to emulate the glorious deeds of heroes, showing their bravery and recklessness on all occasions, but also to respect the weak, particularly women, and to be generous with the defeated enemy: there are frequent incidents in which a prisoner enemy king is generously sent back to his own country with great ceremony.

The Rajputs, trained as they were from an early age, excelled in the use of weapons as well as in all sports where courage and ability are imperative: hunting, archery, polo and wrestling were their favourite pastimes; being of a romantic and passionate disposition, they further found natural fulfilment for their sensitive minds in music, poetry and arts.

Love, always idealized, is also practised in a heroic way, as legends relate; at the same time, being pervaded with an atmosphere of subtle sensuality, it is also considered as a game (*līlā*) between lovers who, through their skirmishes, experience the infinite gammut of love's sentiments, from joy to melancholy, to regret, to desperation. The religious feeling which pervades all aspects of their life is present in their love, too: the stories that have the god Kṛṣṇa and his spouse Rādhā as their protagonists, even in their wordly form, point to a path of spiritual elevation. The ideal of love, understood as fidelity beyond death, and the heroic spirit of this brave and chivalrous, generous and loyal people, find their ultimate fulfilment in the traditional and gruesome custom of the *jōhar*, the sacrifice of widows (*satī*) which often recurs in the history of Rajasthan: the fort at Chitor, the stronghold of the Mewar kingdom, had to be surrendered no less than three times; the warriors having seen the impossibility of any resistance, struck up the hymn of victory, opened the fort gates and rushed at their enemies for the last time, seeking a glorious death, while their women, wearing their wedding dresses, bedecked with rich jewels, headed by the queen, flung themselves into a huge pyre to join their husbands in death. The *jōhar* was common practice in Rajasthan and, nothwithstanding British prohibition, it was practised until a few decades ago. *Satīs*, who were immolated on their spouse's funeral

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pyre and became « pure » by this act of self-sacrifice have always been a meaningful example for the people of Rajasthan. *Jōhar* memorials, on which the hands of women who sacrificed themselves are engraved, are still today the object of veneration.

The old dynasties which ruled the region with alternate vicissitudes boast a divine descent. The Rathors of Marwar, of Bikaner and Kishangarh, the Guhilots or Sisodias of Mewar and the Kachhwahas of Amber-Jaipur derive their lineage from the Sun and acknowledge the god Rāma (Viṣṇu's incarnation) or one of the Pāṇḍava brothers, the heroes of the *Mahābhārata* epic, as their ancestors. The Bhattis of Jaisalmer descend from the Moon, while the Chauhans of Ajmer, of Bundi-Kotah and of Sirohi, originate from Fire (which was created by the wise Vaśiṣṭha by virtue of his spiritual powers).

The earliest historical reference to the Rajputs is found in the *Mahābhārata*, where their small possessions around Delhi are mentioned. Local tradition points to some areas in Rajasthan – such as modern Bairat – as the places of exile of the five Pāṇḍava brothers and of their spouse Draupadī, from whom, as mentioned above, some clans claim their origin [2].

Following a long period wrapped in legends having mythical characters as their protagonists, from about the 7th-8th century, there is a phase which is supported by more historical evidence, where the names of rulers who actually existed begin to appear.

Political events, mostly related to the invasions by the Scythian people first and the Muslims later, caused the Rajput clan to move from the northern regions towards the hills facing the Himālaya and Malwa, their present location in Rajasthan. They ousted the natives who were pushed towards wild and inaccessible places, and they succeeded, in some instances, such as the Bhils, the Jats and the Minas, in preserving their ethnical identity to some extent even to this day.

Always dominated by a strong individualistic spirit, and troubled by rivalries and internal conflicts which caused their political separation, Rajput races never succeeded in creating a united front against invading enemies, despite being able to boast a glorious warlike tradition and uncommon bravery, which was shown on more than one occasion in the course of their history when they defended their territories; hence they fell one by one before the enemy, however with great heroism and dignity, they lost their independence and finally became vassal states of the great Moghul empire. Their proud attitude won them the respect of the new invaders who, after conquering them, sought their friendship and co-operation, inviting them to share court life, marrying their princesses and appointing them to important positions, such as governors of the provinces of the empire, and even to the command of the army.

The aim of this exhibition is to enact a story of old, by conjuring it up through the rarefied and still atmosphere of miniatures and the tales of the deeds of the Rajputs in the Rajasthan regions, crowded with invincible, brave and loyal heroes moving in a magnificent and mysterious setting.

The « strong sentiments » of this warlike race led to acts of unmatched gallantry and heroism, as well as to criminal and gruesome actions, always enacted in a climate of exasperated ideals and yearning.

The following chapter, far from being an introduction to the history of the regions of Rajasthan, which incidentally is extremely confused as a result of continuous internal and external struggles, is rather meant to relate those episodes which, even if not always supported by historical evidence, are often purposely emphasized, so as to illustrate the spirit of this people, tenacious, brave and violent both for good and for bad, just as it is still felt today – relived through tales, songs and ballads.

The Sisodia clan

The lineage counting the earliest and most glorious traditions and boasting an uninterrupted descent and dominion of the same region since the 2nd century A.D., is that of the Guhilots or Sisodias.

The respect which that family has always command-

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ed derives not only from its ancient origin, but also from the exploits of its ancestors and from its strenuous opposition to Muslim invasion in defence of freedom: indeed this was the last of the Rajput kingdoms to yield to the enemy.

Tradition claims that the family originates from the Sun, which became the symbol and emblem of this lineage: a large brass sun, covered in gold, with long shining rays, is situated in the first courtyard of the palace at Udaipur, while another smaller sun, is to be found in one of its loggias, overlooking the city. The ruler, an incarnation of the Sun (Sūrya), used to show himself to his people from the height of his palace.

Following a long period of confusion wrapped in legend, during which it seems that the lineage's place of residence is to be located in the northern regions and Kashmir, there is another still very uncertain period in the 2nd century A.D.; however, here we have evidence of some historical facts which actually took place and we can locate the formation of a new kingdom in the Saurashtra peninsula.

After the sack of 525 by invaders from the west, Queen Pushpavati, the only survivor in the family, sought refuge in the forests of Mewar. After giving birth in a cave to a child, who was named Goha or Guhil, meaning « born in a cave », this fearless woman prepared the funeral pyre upon which she went to her death. The young man, who had been brought up by the Bhils – an indigenous tribe of Mewar – thanks to their help put together a vast kingdom south-west of the region [3]. From the name of this ruler, the lineage was known as Guhilot; the term Sisodia appears only in the Middle Ages: legend has it that the Mahārāṇā Rahap, who ascended the throne in 1201, having fallen seriously ill, was cured by a holy man, according to some, with cow meat, or, according to others, with wine; however both these substances were forbidden. Later the ruler, learning the reason for his recovery, resolved to commit suicide by drinking a goblet of *sīsā* (molten lead) in order to wipe out such a shame, hence the name of Sisodia; the Mahārāṇā managed miraculously to overcome this trial, as well [4].

From the dark years following Goha's exploits there emerges, during the first half of the 8th century, yet another great mythical character, the protagonist of legendary events, that of king Bapa Rawal [5]. Still a child, he was banished together with his mother by a usurper, but later, with the help of the Bhil tribe, he managed to conquer the city of Chitor. His exploit was blessed by the holy Shaiva hermit Harita, a devotee of Ekalinga (a hypostasis of the god Śiva), whom he had followed for years as a disciple; in his memory Bapa built a complex of temples at the place where the holy man had lived and chose the god Śiva as the tutelary deity of his family, although his family claims Rama, a Vaishnava deity, as its founder. The temple at Ekaliṅga is still today one of the holiest in India. Out of respect for the god, the king took on the title of *dīvān*, viceroy, meaning by this to offer his services to Śiva. Tradition has it that the goddess Vindhya Vāsinī (Durgā) presented him with battle weapons, in particular, a double-bladed sword (*khāṇḍā*) weighing over 40 kg. which became traditionally famous and the Sisodias' weapon « par excellence » [6].

The Bhils, who had helped the *rājā* to conquer the throne, were thereafter regarded as faithful allies: in the Sisodias' coat-of-arms a Bhil and a Rajput warrior appear supporting a large shield; furthermore, the act performed by a Bhil to Bapa Rawal is repeated during the coronation ceremony to symbolize fraternal unity between the two peoples: the auspicious mark (*ṭīkā*) is made on the king's forehead with the blood of a Bhil warrior [7].

The history of Mewar, troubled as it was by long wars against the Muslims to safeguard independence and by long periods of famine and misery following the wars themselves, is rich in episodes of gallantry showing the warlike spirit of this people, who succeeded in relentlessly holding invaders at bay, but who eventually had to accept honourable and inevitable peace.

One of the most famous events took place in 1303 at the time of the siege of Chitor by Ala-ud-din, the Turkish ruler who had invaded the northern regions of

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India. Having heard of the beauty of Padminī, the wife of the Mahārāṇā Ratan Singh, he promised that he would raise the siege if he was allowed to admire the woman's face just for an instant. Consequently he was allowed to gaze at the princess's image reflected through a mirror. After satisfying this wish, the trusting Mahārāṇā accompanied the Turkish ruler to the foot of the fort, where, however, he was taken prisoner by the armies of the perjured enemy.

Then, Ala-ud-din requested Padminī, in exchange for the liberation of the king. Padminī went to the enemy camp with a large retinue of maids, as her rank demanded. Hidden inside the 700 palanquins of the retinue, however, there were Rajput soldiers, who succeeded in freeing the prisoner. Ala-ud-din's assault on the fort was then decisive. Realizing that the end was near, the women, according to Rajput custom, prepared a big pyre and they flung themselves into the flames, led by Padminī herself, while the men, headed by their king, came out of the city holding their weapons in their hands to meet bravely their enemy and their death.

The fort, held by the invaders for a few years, was then reconquered by Hamir Singh (1314-78). The gallant exploits performed by this ruler, as well as by his successors, are likewise related.

Mahārāṇā Kumbha (1433-68) was one of the greatest rulers of mediaeval India. Besides being a brave and able warrior, he was also a great builder, a lover of literature and music and a writer and musician himself. To commemorate his victory against the Malwa Muslim forces, in 1448 he erected a 37 metre high tower called Vijaya-Stambha or « victory tower ». He built no fewer than 32 out of the 84 fortresses in his state [8]. He also built temples, public buildings and water reservoirs. In the years of his rule, the state of Mewar reached the height of its splendour. This great ruler was treacherously murdered by a son, called Udaya. The latter's epithet, Hatyārā, came subsequently to mean « murderer » [9].

Mahārāṇā Sanga (1509-28) also showed bravery and ability; he was victorious aganist the sultans of Delhi, Gujarat and Malwa no less than 18 times, and he succeeded in taking prisoner the ruler of Mancu, whom later he generously sent back home [10]. Under his enlightened rule, the state had a large part of Rajasthan under its direct or indirect control, and it enjoyed a long period of prosperity. He is said to have been injured more than 80 times in combat, to have lost an eye and a hand, and to have been left lame [11].

The confederation of Rajput states that he had put together to oppose a common front to the first Moghul emperor, Babur, though successful at first, did not manage to hold off the invaders who, according to some traditions, were helped in their attempt by a general turned traitor. A new era was beginning, that of Moghul rule. Though seriously injured, Mahārāṇā Sanga managed to avoid capture and he hid in the forests; however, while he was still planning actions of revenge against the Moghuls, he died. His bravery was even acknowledged by his enemy and victor, who wrote the following of him: « Rāṇā Sanga attained his present high eminence by his own valour and his sword » [12].

The weakness of his two successors prompted Bahadur Shah, the king of Gujarat, to launch the umpteenth attack against the fort of Chitor in 1535. Once again the defenders, led by the queen-mother Karmavatī – her two sons Vikramāditya and Udai Singh had been sent elsewhere for safety's sake – vowed themselves to death: 13,000 Rajput women performed the *jōhar*, while, as tradition dictates, 32,000 warriors fought to the last man against the enemy [13].

The history of the succession to the throne of the Mahārāṇās, as was also the case with many Rajput princes, is often marked by violent and criminal acts.

Vikramaditya, Mahārāṇā Sanga's successor, was murdered by a usurper, and the same lot would have befallen the young Udai Singh if his governess, Panna, had not substituted him in bed with her own son, who was thus killed instead.

After coming of age, Udai Singh (1540-72) was recognized by his nobles as their legitimate ruler and, after defeating the usurper, he regained his ancestral throne with great honours. During his reign, on the

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initiative of the great Moghul ruler, Akbar, the fort of Chitor underwent its third and last attack, which again ended up with the death of its defenders and the pyre of the women. Once again the enemy did not have the satisfaction of getting the Mahārāṇā, whether dead or alive, because in view of the imminent danger, he had been taken away from the fort.

Near the Udai Sagar reservoir which he had built, he gave rise to a new capital which was named Udaipur after him: city of Udai, namely of the east, where the sun rises.

Equally elusive was his successor, the Mahārāṇā Pratap Singh (1572-97) a beautiful and noble hero and warrior and, at the same time, a skilful administrator and politician, who became a symbol of his people's spirit of freedom. Eager to avenge the honour of his lineage and to reconquer Chitor, certain that never « the son of Bappa Rawal should bow the head to mortal man » [14], according to tradition, he lived for a long time in the forests on the Aravalli mountains, together with his family and those nobles who wished to follow him and who were animated by the same spirit of freedom. He bore all misfortunes with great courage and became a legendary hero already during his lifetime.

For 25 years, with alternating vicissitudes, thanks to the help of the faithful Bhils, he strenuously opposed Akbar's attempts to break down the last rampart of the Rajput resistance – by then all the rulers in Rajasthan had surrendered to the pressure of arms – and he refused all proposals of peace.

Of the great battle of Haldighati (fig. 14), which took place in 1576 against the Moghuls, during which no less than 3,000 men are said to have lost their lives, an incident which has become famous is related about the abnegation and faithfulness of the Mahārāṇā's horse, Chetak; after being mortally wounded by a knife manoeuvred by the trunk of the enemy general's elephant, the animal nevertheless managed to carry its rider, who was also badly injured, far from the fray, only to die then at his feet.

In the life of this king many are the incidents that reveal a generous and magnanimous spirit even with regard to his enemies. Even when they were his prisoners, he treated them with great respect: he also freed the wives of one of his enemies after stating that « the personal honour of his enemies was as safe in his hands as in their own » [15].

Even Pratap Singh's enemies respected him. On the news of his death, which occurred as a consequence of a trivial hunting accident, Akbar himself wrote thus: « O Pratap, you kept your horses unbranded, your head unbowed, your fame untarnished. You were strong enough to carry on your work against heavy odds. You never participated in Nauroza festival, nor did you mount guard on the imperial presence, down the Jharokha Darshan (the salutation balcony). You attained a very high place in this world. On hearing of your death, o Pratap, Akbar's eyes were dimmed and his tongue stuck in his throat » [16].

Nevertheless, the Sisodias' dream of independence was doomed to end: in order to bend Mewar for good, the strong army of Akbar's successor, Jahangir, forced the Rāṇā Amar Singh (1597-1620) to make a peace which, although honourable, disgusted the heir to the great Pratap, who opted to entrust the government to his son, prince Karan Singh (1620-28).

No longer at war, the state went through a period of affluence, under the leadership of enlightened rulers who were also fond of beauty; the city was enriched with new buildings, and arts, fostered as they were by the sensitivity of princes, could prosper, receiving new impulse and renovated vigour from the contact with Moghul culture.

Karan Singh was a great friend of prince Khurrum, the future Shah Jahan who, a runaway from his father, was given hospitality in the magnificent palace called Jagmandir, which was built on Lake Pichola. Before leaving Udaipur – where after his father's death he was hailed as emperor for the first time – Shah Jahan exchanged turbans with the Mahārāṇā as a gesture of brotherly friendship.

Aurangzeb's narrow and bigoted anti-Hindu policy spoiled the friendly relationships with Mewar and gave rise to new hostilities. Not last among the causes of the

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emperor's resentment was the terrible insult that he suffered from Raj Singh (1652-80). The latter was sensitive to the entreaties for help which were addressed to him by princess Charumati of Kishangarh, who refused the marriage with the Moghul ruler which was imposed upon her for state reasons, and he openly defied Aurangzeb's wrath by marrying the beautiful Charumati, thus freeing her from an unwanted marriage with a Muslim [17].

Tradition generally shows that all the sovereigns were particularly generous towards the people. On the day of his coronation, which took place at the Ekaliṅga temple during the traditional ceremony called *tulādān*, sitting on a scale, Raj Singh is said to have given his weight for charity not in gold, as was customary, but in precious stones [18] (fig. 19).

He also built an irrigation reservoir, which was called Rajsamand. He was imitated in this by his successor, Jay Singh (1680-98), who is responsible for the building of one of the largest reservoirs in India, Lake Jaisamand, « Victory Sea ».

With the death of Aurangzeb one witnesses the decay of the empire afflicted by wars of succession and the reawakening of a trend towards self-rule in the single states, which, however, did not lead to any effective combined action against external enemies.

Just as all the kingdoms in Rajasthan, Mewar went through a long, tragic and obscure period, a prey to the continuous raids of the Marathas and the Pindaris, warlike tribes from Maharashtra (central-western India), who were led by valiant leaders with no scruples, who succeeded in creating a strong state by expanding their territories at the expense of neighbouring kingdoms. Only the arrival of the British in 1818 succeeded in bending the arrogance of these « terrible marauders » and to restore peace all over the territory.

Traditionally unable to form a common front against their enemy because of continual and futile rivalries, and also unable to solve their serious external and internal problems, in reaction to the economic and political decay of their kingdoms, the last Rajput rulers surrounded themselves with luxuries, leading a vain and dissolute life, devoting themselves mostly to feasts and performances, hunting and entertainments. Furthermore, alcohol and drugs, of which kings made extensive use, contributed to the moral decay of this fearless and valiant race.

A tragic as well as moving episode, having the beautiful Krishnakumari, the daughter of the Rāṇā Bhim Singh (1778-1828), as its protagonist, is characteristic of the state of tension and rivalry among the Rajput states. The princess was betrothed to the ruler of Jodhpur, who, however, died. Arrangements were then made for another marriage with the Mahārājā Jagat Singh of Jaipur, but in accordance with tradition the successor of the ruler of Jodhpur, the Rājā Man Singh, claimed the young lady's hand threatening a combined military action with the Marathas. A catastrophe was imminent for Mewar; the princess was doomed: however, no one had the heart to kill her; hence she bravely drank the poison which had been prepared for her [19].

It was indeed during the long reign of Bhim Singh that, in his capacity as Agent of the British Government, Colonel James Tod stayed in Mewar for the first time in 1806, and then from 1818 to 1822. A very cultured man with innumerable interests, an accurate and careful worker, he was interested in local traditions, was loved and respected by the Indians for the rectitude of his actions, and at the same time he was the greatest scholar of the history and culture of Rajasthan. His monumental work *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, which was published in two volumes in 1829-32, is still regarded today as the most important work for the study of the history and traditions of this region because of the wealth of information and historical, geographical and cultural data which he collected during the long period that he spent there, and which are based on historical, literary and epigraphic sources, and on tales heard in person from singers, poets, pandits, brahmans and wise old men.

Despite the general moral decadence, even the last period of the history of Mewar shows some positive aspects, because of the reforms which some kings

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wanted in the fields of administration, justice, education, health; furthermore, incidents reminiscent of the loftiness and pride of the Sisodias' clan are not lacking. The Rāṇās always showed an attitude of loyalty and firm dignity towards the British Empire, thus maintaining their prestige and respect both within and without their state. King Sarup Singh (1842-61) granted protection to fleeing British women and children after the terrible anti-British rebellion – Mutiny – of 1857, giving them lodging in his palace on Jagmandir Island.

In 1871 the British Government conferred on the Rāṇā Shambhu Singh (1861-74) the title of « Grand Commander of Star of India », which he scornfully rejected inasmuch as he regarded himself as the « Sun of Hindus », therefore, much brighter than a star. The Mahārāṇās were the only Rajput rulers who never took part in the *dar'bārs* decided by the Crown in Delhi, because the seat that would have been assigned to them would have been unworthy of the name of the family [20].

The Kachhwaha clan

The Kachhwaha dynasty also claims its descent from the Sun, through Rama's second son, Kuśa, and its members are called *Suraj'vaṃśi*, sons of the Sun. The yearly festival dedicated to the god is celebrated with special solemnity by this family: an imposing Sun cart drawn by eight horses carries Rāma's descendant through the capital.

The origin of this lineage is obscure: towards the end of the 3rd century A.D. it moved from the region of Bihar to the former state of Gwalior. In the 10th century prince Dhola Rai, deprived of his kingdom by an uncle, was saved by his mother who fled hiding him in a basket which she carried on her head. Both took refuge among the indigenous Mina people, who lived in the territory which corresponds to present day Amber. The king of the Minas gave them a warm welcome.

When the prince grew up, however, on the occasion of the festival of Dīvālī he betrayed the hospitality he had received by killing his benefactor while he was performing ritual ablutions with his retinue in a sacred pool. He was helped in this by a traitor, who met the same fate; he, in turn, was killed by Dhola Rai himself, who said: « He who had proved unfaithful to one master, could not be trusted by another » [21]. This prince – who founded his new kingdom in blood – was nevertheless the object of poems and epics telling of his love for the beautiful Mārūṇī (fig. 108).

The history of this dynasty, just as that of most Rajput kingdoms, is also characterized by constant boundary wars which were aimed at expanding territories or at defending them from the aggressiveness of neighbouring states; consequently it opposed a weak resistance to the Moghuls, and was the first to be compelled to accept their supremacy. Because of their loyalty, they enjoyed the friendship of emperors; they were always honoured and respected and they also held important positions in the government and in the army.

Bhagwan Das (1574-90) was a great friend of Akbar's and he influenced the latter's expansionist policy, also taking part in his peace negotiations with other Rajput princes. He started a marriage policy between Rajput princesses and Moghul emperors, giving his sister Marianuz Zamani, the future mother of Jahangir, to Akbar as a bride. Although this was frowned upon by other Rajput kings because of their strong race feelings and for religious reasons, it fostered friendly ties with the empire and it contributed to the two-way diffusion of new modes of life and cultural traditions, which influenced arts, too.

Man Singh (1590-1616?), another great friend of Akbar's, was the most important Rajput ruler of his time; he had a position of prestige in the imperial army. This ruler is remembered for having had 1,500 wives, 60 of whom allowed themselves to be burnt on the pyre on his death [22]. During his reign Amber acquired a chief role in arts, too, contributing to the process of cultural syncretism between different traditions; the Moghul court, with its magnificence and etiquette, became a model to be imitated and it influenced the habits and customs of the life in the provinces to a great extent.

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Another great character was Jai Singh I (1622-68) who was given the title of Mīrza Rājā (Noble sovereign) by the emperor. He, too, was one of Shah Jahan's and Aurangzeb's most capable and prestigious generals. He was a very cultured man – besides Hindi, he knew Turkish, Persian and Arabic – and a lover of arts; his court became the main centre of irradiation of new artistic expressions, in which a strong Moghul streak is apparent. A great builder, he is said to have provoked the old Shah Jahan's anger beacuse he dared to imitate imperial architecture in erecting his new palace at Amber. His power and influence caused Aurangzeb to be jealous and suspicious of him: sitting among his vassals in the *dar'bār* he is said to have boasted of his powers and, after breaking one of the two cups that he held in his hands (one cup he called Delhi and the other the city of Satara), to have uttered these words: « There goes Satarra; the fate of Delhi is in my right hand, and this with like facility I can cast away »[23].

It seems that the emperor, irritated by the Rājā's excessive power, instigated the latter's younger son to kill him: the youth carried out the task by mixing poison with his father's opium.

Signs of uneasiness following Aurangzeb's obtuse policy were also evident under the rule of Jai Singh's successors, particularly with Jai Singh II (1699-1743), another great enlightened king with remarkable political gifts, who was able to maintain a balanced attitude towards the emperor notwithstanding the difficult historical moment and despite the fact that he formed new political alliances with other Rajput states. He is known by the title of « Savāī », meaning « a quarter more (than others) » to mark his superiority over his contemporaries.

Although his reign was troubled by constant wars and intrigues, as a true Renaissance ruler, being very cultured and endowed with artistic feeling, he gave a great impetus to the arts and sciences; he founded a new town which was named Jaipur after him and which was known as the « pink city » because of the pink-coloured sandstone which was used: he adorned it with magnificent palaces; being very keen of astronomy, he built no fewer than five observatories, at Jaipur, Benares, Delhi, Ujjain and Mathura, which were provided with accurate and often huge instruments for measuring the sun and stars, and capable of carrying out calculations which proved to be more accurate than those made in the West.

Aurangzeb's long absence from his court – he was involved in wars in the Deccan for no less than 26 years – and his lack of interest in the arts, caused their decadence and compelled many artists to emigrate to neighbouring courts. This phenomenon increased with the progressive decay of the empire, which reached its climax with the sack of Delhi, first by Nadir Shah (1739) and then by the Afghans (1757).

Because of its proximity to Delhi, the state of Amber absorbed most of the refugee artists and the latter notably influenced local production. Amber, and subsequently Jaipur, were among the most fascinating cultural centres, rich as they were in new cultural ferments.

The last great ruler in this dynasty was Pratap Singh (1779-1803), a gallant and cautious prince. Although victorious over the Marathas in the epic battle at Ton ga (1787), he did not succeed in completely wiping out their incursions, which went on devastating the country for years. This calamity and bad government by mediocre rulers soon led the country into great difficulties, which lasted until the British take-over.

The Rathor clan

According to one tradition, this clan also descends from the Sun; however, another tradition claims that they originate from the backbone (*raht*) of the god Indra. The family claims an uninterrupted lineage for a period of 1,360 years, as handed down by chronicles, dynastic lists and even by Muslim sources, while for the previous centuries their history is left to poets and bards.

It is difficult to follow the history of this clan, at least until the beginning of the 15th century; the expansion of the Delhi sultanate did not favour the growth of the little state, which is to be found in the

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Kher region; only the decline of Muslim power gave the Rathors a chance to strengthen and enlarge their possessions. A succession of wars and struggles among members of the same clan followed uninterruptedly.

Jodha, the first great king of Marwar, following the advice of an old ascetic, founded the new capital in 1459; it was called Jodhpur after him, and developed at the foot of an inaccessible elevation known as « Bakurchirea », that is « birds' nest », on which he built an impregnable fortress.

No fewer than 17 children were born to Jodha, who put them in charge of fortresses and outposts in defence of his territory which, in the meantime, had considerably expandend in the north and west. One of his sons, Bika by name, founded the city of Bikaner, which subsequently became the centre of an important kingdom.

Of this clan we would like to remember here those episodes which, although not always historically ascertained, emphasize their proud and brave character, rather than their family history, which is similar to that of other Rajput states.

An episode akin to the rape of the Sabines, which inspired a famous poem that is till sung nowadays on the occasion of the Tij festival, had the Rājā Suja Singh (1491-1516?) as a protagonist. A gang of Pathanis (plunderers from the north) made an incursion in the little town of Pipar and abducted 140 Rajput women; notwithstanding the disproportion in numbers, the king at the head of his cavalrymen succeeded in freeing the women, at the cost of his own life.

« The bravest and strongest ruler of his time », thus Colonel Tod defines the Rājā Maldeo (1532-69); at first by taking advantage of the lack of interest shown by the first Moghul rulers for the desert and barren region of Marwar, he succeeded in enlarging his territory considerably, thus becoming « the most potent prince in Hindustan » [24]; subsequently he had to reduce his expansionist ambitions and had to bravely defend his own state against Sher Shah's army; he well deserved the recognition of his enemy who is said to have admitted that « he had nearly lost the empire of Hindusthan for a handful of barley » (a reference to the poverty of Marwar) [25].

After subduing these peoples' spirit of freedom by force, the emperor Akbar sought their friendship by marrying one of their princesses and bestowing favours and important posts in the army and state to the Rājā Udai Singh (1584-94), the great Maldeo's successor.

Also this king was immortalized by the bards who sang of his political and military gifts; he is said to have ended his life a prey to remorse, pursued by the ghost of a girl he had seduced, the daughter of a brahman, who sacrificed her on the altar of the goddess Āya Mātā, tearing her to pieces and then burning her in order to wash away the stain of shame; likewise the brahman himself climbed up on to the same pyre, raising a terrible curse to the sky against the king [26].

Although Rathor rulers distinguished themselves at the court of the first Moghul princes for their faithfulness and loyalty – Jay Singh (1620-38) was in great favour with the emperor Jahangir, who appointed him viceroy of the Deccan – Aurangzeb's untrustworthy attitude and his anti-Hindu policy caused their estrangement. Wars against external enemies and civil strife characterize this period; the Marwar region is still today marked by the cenotaphs of Rathor soldiers, silent witnesses of so much heroism; suffice it to remember how a whole army vowed itself to death in the great battle of Lake Pushkar in order to defend the Varāha temple from the Moghuls.

Ajit Singh (1678-1725) is also mentioned as a « brave and clever » man who had to overcome great difficulties, wars and intrigue throughout his life, and some of the most beautiful pages in Rajput history were written for his salvation. He was murdered by his son and at his funeral his 6 wives and 58 concubines flung themselves into the flames.

The Rājā Bakht Singh (1751-53) whose gifts of bravery and wisdom won him the respect of the nobles, even though he had usurped the throne and was guilty of parricide, was another true model of Rajput. Already before becoming a king he fought a memorable battle against a coalition of Rajput princes. In that moment

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of danger for his state, he forgot his grudges against his brother, king Abhi Singh, to whom he offered his sword. More than a hundred thousand men under the command of Jay Singh of Amber drew up in battle order; shouting « Let none follow me who is not prepared for victory or death » [27] with his five thousand soldiers he attacked the enemy. Having miraculously succeeded in getting through, he found himself in the company of 60 heroes. The saying « One Rathor equalled five Kachhwahas » comes from that gallant action.

Even the poets of the opposite side remember that episode in their songs: « Who could support the flames from this volcano of steel, when Bukhta's sword became the sickle of Time? » [28]. The heroic Bakht Singh ended his life, poisoned by a Kachhwaha princess on a courtesy visit to his camp.

The history of the Rathors continues with strife, wars and intrigues for succession; then Maratha interference within the Marwar territory itself following the support given to king Bijai Singh (1753-93) to regain his throne, feudal anarchy and the lowering of moral standards due to the excessive use of drugs and alcohol, rife among the last rulers, brought the state to an inevitable political and moral decay.

The other states of the Rajasthan

The history of the other kingdoms of Rajasthan is not different: internal and external wars, intrigue and power struggles, heroes and unscrupulous men inspired an epic of tales which are still very much alive in popular tradition.

* * *

The Jaisalmer family claims that it belongs to the Moon lineage of the Yadus and acknowledge Kṛṣṇa as its founder. Its name derives from Bhatti, the first great ruler to emerge from the haze of legends.

Even though we do not possess any certain historical data, the genealogies of this clan provide some elements which make it possible to trace its movements: from the Ghazni area it was pushed towards Punjab, whence it moved into the western desert. In 1156 Jaisal founded the city of Jaisalmer, a true « pearl of the desert », with magnificent stone houses decorated with open-work like lace, surrounded by high walls and powerful ramparts of the same colour as the desert; it very soon became a wealthy town because it was an important meeting point for caravan tracks linking India to middle-eastern countries.

It was sacked in 1294 by the emperor Ala-ud-din. On that occasion, consistent with Rajput spirit and traditions, no fewer than 24,000 women and children are said to have killed themselves on the pyre or stabbing themselves with swords, while 3,800 warriors met their death fighting against the enemy.

Chronicles also relate an episode which occurred during the siege of Jaisalmer, extolling the Rajput sense of honour and loyalty: during the long year of siege the Rajput prince Ruttunsi and the leader of the enemy army, the Nawāb Mabub Khan, became friends and were in the habit of meeting often in enemy emplacements to play chess, followed by a few faithful attendants, later to fight honourably when the time came to join battle.

This attitude of gallant courtesy roused the suspicion of the king of Ghor, who ordered his general to launch the decisive attack on the fort: on that occasion, however, more than 9,000 men lost their lives, repelled by the besieged [29].

It was only under Shah Jahan that the Jaisalmer kings became vassals of the Moghul Empire. They were the last to acknowledge British supremacy.

* * *

The Bundi family of the Chauhan clan also has ancient origins; in the 7th century A.D. its dominions extended around Ajmer, and only around 1242 did it occupy the present territory, taking it away from aboriginal tribes.

Its leaders became tributaries to the Moghuls and

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got important military positions, especially during the reign of Jahangir. The emperor Shah Jahan, grateful for Rāo Ratan's (1607-14) friendly attitude when, a rebel against his father, he was taken prisoner, granted that the king's descendants divide the territory into two kingdoms; thus, in 1625, the kingdom of Kotah came into being.

The kings of Bundi and Kotah are also remembered for their dexterity as hunters, and miniatures often depict them in that favourite pastime of theirs.

* * *

The kingdom of Bikaner, as mentioned before, was founded in 1488 by one of the sons of the Mahārājā Jodha of Jodhpur, Bika by name, who left Marwar with his comrades with the aim of extending and strengthening his paternal dominions. Although the town arose in a desert waste land, it soon grew into an outstanding political, commercial and cultural centre, as it lay along an important caravan track route leading to Gujarat, from where one could proceed to Mecca; it was, therefore, visited by rich Jaina traders and by Muslims on their way to holy places.

The friendly relationship established by kings with Moghul emperors – a princess from Bikaner was one of Jahangir's wives – resulted in their being able to strengthen and extend their kingdom.

The court was particularly lively in its cultural interests and ready to accept Moghul artists and painters. Furthermore, the expeditions in the Deccan resulted in the introduction of a strong stylistic streak from central India into arts. During the reigns of Karan Singh (1632-69) and Anup Singh (1674-1709), Bikaner became one of the most beautiful and culturally important courts in India.

The succession to the crown of the last *rājās* is characterized by gruesome episodes by the kings' kinsmen: the regent Surat Singh (1787-1828) did not hesitate to strangle his grandchild with his own hands, after he treacherously got the child's mother to leave the palace instead of keeping watch over him [30].

* * *

The state of Kishangarh, as already mentioned, belonged to a cadet branch of the Rathor clan. Its founder, Kishan Singh, the eighth son of the *rājā* Udai Singh of Jodhpur, received the military command of that territory from Jahangir about 1603. His successors, faithful allies to the Moghuls for a period, in time increased their power and built a beautiful palace on the shores of the charming lake Gundaloo, in imitation of the other more prestigious rulers in Rajasthan. Notwithstanding the incessantly troubled life within and without the kingdom, its rulers did not forget the arts – painting in particular – giving birth to a school which can be undoubtedly counted among the main ones in Rajasthan for its originality and standard of quality.

It was probably king Sawant Singh (1748-64) who gave a strong impulse to the arts. A brave and fearless warrior, as well as an eminent philosopher and poet, he renounced the kingdom after many struggles for its possession, and took to an ascetic life, accompanied by the beautiful Bani Thani, who inspired artists and poets. He became a follower of the Vallabhacarya sect.

* * *

This account could continue.

The saying « everything is unstable, life is like a spark of fire; home, country, lands will disappear, but a good name will last for ever » well suits Rajput episodes, tales, legends and stories.

ROSA MARIA CIMINO

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Portrait painting [figs. 1-12]

Imitating the Moghuls, Rajput courts developed portraiture considerably; it became a status symbol; even minor local rulers and squires were fond of having their « official » portraits which depicted them in highly hieratic postures.

Among the subjects depicted in miniatures, portraiture is the one most intimately linked to Moghul art. From the latter it derives its pattern of composition and some of its iconographic elements, such as clothes; from Moghul art, it also inherits elements of style, e.g. a special care for details.

The sovereign, generally indicated as the Mahārājā, great king or, with the same meaning, as Mahārāṇā, especially in the Sisodia family, or again, for minor sovereigns, as Rāo, Ravat or Kumvar, chief or prince, is portrayed standing up, his body at three quarters and his head in profile. He wears the *jāmā*, of central Asian origin, worn by Moghul emperors: it is a tunic tied at the waist, fastened on the side, with a full skirt which occasionally, if transparent, lets the onlooker catch a glimpse of the tight trousers; its length varies according to the period and is, therefore, a good clue for dating: in fact, whereas prior to the 19th century it is rather short, in later times it reaches to the ground. A wide brocade band (*paṭkā*) girdles the waist and often hangs over the front. A dagger with double hilt (*kaṭār*) is inserted in the girdle [1].

The head is covered with a turban (*pag'ṛī*) of numberless shapes which indicated the appurtenance to a given clan or caste; this also varies in the course of time, hence becoming another chronological clue. The turban is usually embellished with a precious jewel, just as the ears and neck are adorned with valuable jewels. The king may hold a long sword, often with a curved blade (*talvār*), or even a flower, showing the sensibility of a strong and brave race.

A few characterizations of the features of faces, which allow to identify kings, are obtained through extreme stylization, so much so that they become conventional and stereotyped elements. Furthermore, the immobility of the figure and the fixity of its look confer a strongly hieratical feeling, crystallizing it into an ideal image remote from reality.

Far from an intent of psychological depth, which is so evident in Moghul portraiture, the figures of *rājās* rather show a heroic spirit and a firmness of mind, which are more ideal and impersonal than related to individuality.

The few naturalistic elements making up the background and setting of the image – flowers spread over a flat green field, hills which are merely outlined, high above the horizon, and white clouds, which often cannot be recognized because of their bizarre spiral shapes – contribute to leave the figure intact in its closed kingly splendour.

Kings may also be portrayed half-length, sitting cross-legged on a low throne or on a carpet, with a thick cylindrical bolster at the back, and they are often depicted while smoking a water-pipe (*ḥuqqā*) or while telling their beads with their fingers, surrounded by a few high dignitaries (figs. 5; 12).

Official portraits are also those in which the king appears on horseback and stands out gigantically on a uniform field of colour. The attendants who are occasionally depicted around him, however numerous, do not distract the attention from the chief image, which stands out solemn and unchallenged, owing to their

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frequently small scale and to the fixity and uniformity of their attitude (figs. 8-12).

The horse, richly adorned with precious harness, is depicted while walking at a majestic pace, or else rearing up, with the rider sitting proudly straight on its back. However, the movement is deprived of its impetus, because of the stiff and conventional position of the legs. It is a « static » portrait also for the horse, which has, as it were, been robbed of the throb of life, so that it can be fixed in a perfect though static shape. Furthermore, its legs are often raised from the ground so as to emphasize the hieratic character of the figure: the king and his horse live in a superhuman realm, unsullied by any wordly dimension, embodying the qualities peculiar to a noble race, such as loyalty, courage, physical and moral strength (fig. 10). « Dying well is living twice »: the history of Rajput princes, which has become legend, bears witness to this adage of theirs.

Aspects of civil life [figs. 13-29]

As we have seen, the history of Rajasthan is characterized by constant conquest and defensive wars, the strictly political reasons of which are often disguised by tradition with romantic and chivalrous motives. Furthermore, Moghul conquest compelled many rulers to offer their services in wars against other Indian peoples; hence they spent many years of their reign in command of the army. A warrior caste « par excellence », the Rajputs made war their chief occupation and they are even today regarded as capable and brave soldiers (figs. 14-16). They had a feudal system of government; in early times the state belonged to the clan that had succeeded in conquering the territory, and was headed by a king, *primus inter pares*; even if the right of primogeniture was customary, the king was still elected by the assembly of nobles, who also had the power to relieve him of his command.

At the end of the medieval period, possibly also because of influence of Muslim states eager to create strong subordinate governments, the king's power grew to the detriment of the authority previously exercised by other members of the family, who were often in charge of small fiefs. Consequently the *rājā* became the only arbiter of the fate of the state, vigorously repressing the attempts of local chieftains towards self-rule [1]. In his task he was helped by high dignitaries who formed his court and whom he used to receive in *dar'bārs* (official meetings) (figs. 23-24). As Rousselet relates [2], he sits on the throne, while his retinue gathers around him, observing a strict etiquette based on the importance of the positions they occupy. « He seats himself, Indian-fashion, on the velvet cushion, leaning on a shield of rhinoceros hide, as transparent as amber; his tulwar, enriched with precious stones, lies across his knees; his feet, also covered with jewels, are bare, and his sandals are placed by his side on a silver footstool... Over the throne waves the standard of the Sesoudias - the Meywar Sun ». Around it, the British delegates, the great vassal of the crown and the state ministers sit, beside the king, in a semi-circle on 40 sofas. Then come the *ṭhākurs*, the feudal lords of Mewar. Behind the king there are the servants of the royal household, chamberlains, pages, confidential attendants and the director of royal hunts. The nobles appear magnificently dressed, with « costly brocades, Thibet shawls, hereditary jewels, and weapons of priceless value. The turbans which distinguish the different clans are of various forms, from the heavy-looking cone of the Haras to the graceful muslin turban, enriched with strings of diamonds, worn by the nobles of the Court ».

In order to increase his authority, a *rājā* lived in a legendary and rarefied atmosphere, surrounded by the halo of a demigod, which was emphasized by the impressiveness and beauty of the palace and by the pomp with which he loved to be surrounded, really magical in comparison with the misery of most of his subjects; however, he did not keep too aloof from his people: like the sun, he often showed himself to the public to prove his state of health, appearing at a window of his palace; he granted public audiences and very frequently he used to leave his palace on the occasion of religious

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festivals or hunting parties, or in order to spend a pleasant day somewhere in an attractive place (figs. 68-70).

On these occasions he used to ride through the town on a horse or an elephant (figs. 17; 20-22), with much pomp and ceremony; as is still related nowadays by elderly people themselves, he used to halt among his subjects, bestowing presents and benefits. The Rāṇā Fateh Singh, for example, was in the habit of giving coins to women lined along his route when he left the town. His outings consequently turned into an actual general festival, in which the whole population took part.

The king had the right of life or death over his subjects; laws were particularly severe for the common people, but very mild on inexistent for the nobles. Corporal punishment – amputation of hands, whipping, and so forth – and the death penalty – by hanging, stoning, execution by shooting – were carried out in public and were to serve as a deterrent for the population. Rousselet witnessed a particularly gruesome execution in Baroda [3]: the convict, tied hand and foot, was dragged through the streets of the town by an elephant which eventually killed the victim by crushing his head under its leg.

The king used to receive the visits of other *rājās* or of travellers and foreign government agents with great pomp.

Such events, which are also illustrated in miniatures (figs. 25-28), are described in a wealth of detail by travellers who often speak with astonishment of the magnificent hospitality offered to them [4].

The king used to wait for his guests in the throne hall, surrounded by nobles and dignitaries, entertaining them with performances of dance and music. He used to smoke opium in a water-pipe with *rājās* of his own rank. Receiving *betel* and essence of roses from the king was considered to be a great honour – reserved for important and famous warriors.

For security reasons, the king lived separate from his relatives, whom he received in private audiences; the frequency of murders among kins had prompted the *rājās* to adopt some precautions which also limited their affections; however, their long history had allowed the formation of a large number of court dignitaries who had inherited the same positions for generations and who consequently offered better guarantees of loyalty and, despite the precautions, afforded the kings a more comfortable life especially in comparison with Moghul emperors. On the occasion of the coronation of a new Mahārāṇā it was customary, for example at the Sisodias' court, to summon a brahman from the hamlet of Madri, who was entrusted with the important task of personally handing drinks and medicines to the king, who would have refused them had they been brought by others. That custom lasted until 1947 [5].

Tobacco, and especially opium smoke, which was taken through a water-pipe (*ḥuqqā*), was a very common habit among the *rājās*, as is also shown by miniatures portraying kings engrossed in such practices while carrying out every-day activities, even while riding a horse (fig. 5). Opium and drugs in general, as well as alcohol, contributed considerably towards the decline of Rajput states and, to quote Colonel Tod [6], they deprived the *rājā* of half of his virtues, « giving to his natural bravery a character of insane ferocity, and to the countenance, which could otherwise beam with intelligence, an air of imbecility ».

Kings generally had a high standard of education, which they received from learned teachers and tutors, and their culture encompassed various fields of knowledge – as is evident from their letters which are rich in quotations from the classics. They always showed great interest in the arts – particularly music, which was considered to be the art « par excellence », dancing and painting – and, also following the example of Moghul emperors, they actually became true Maecenates, welcoming poets, painters and artists of all kinds to their courts, and also creating art schools. Aurangzeb's involvement in wars far from the capital of his empire and his lack of interest in the arts, as mentioned earlier, caused Moghul artists to emigrate to the provincial courts, which were very happy to welcome them. This phenomenon, which persisted even after the emperor's death, determined a significant revival in the

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local art schools, which came into contact with new styles and iconographic models. While Moghul art started its inevitable decline, arts in the provincial centres of the empire flourished with new vigour.

Music has always played a prominent role in India and undoubtedly was the most appreciated among the kings' pastimes. Like religious singing, it was one of the most important subjects in the education of princes. Each court had its own little group of vocal and instrumental musicians who, as is also shown in miniatures (figs. 25, 46, 49, 68, 70, 72), played before the king during several of his daily occupations, entertaining his guests, too. In Colonel Tod's words [7] « They played their national tuppas with great taste and feeling; and these strains, wafted from the lofty terrace of the palace in the silence of the night, produced a sensation of delight not unmixed with pain, which its peculiarly melancholic character excites ».

Dancing, too, was greatly appreciated. The *nautches*, that is bayadères, were regarded as sacred and were, therefore, respected by everybody; they enjoyed particular privileges, being allowed to wander undisturbed even in the king's apartments and to talk to high-ranking people, and with their grace and services, they made up for the lack of women, who were shut in the part of the palace which was allocated to them (*zanānā*) [8]. The *nautches* performed on the occasion of festivals, ceremonies or parties, or simply to brighten the king's day, and they also accompanied him on his outings from the palace, preceding the procession and then welcoming him on his return (figs. 22,73).

Also the bards or wandering singers, the heirs of very ancient traditions of the Rajput peoples, were welcome at the court. Each important family, then, had its own poet, who enjoyed a particularly privileged position and, to quote Rousselet, his person « holds a higher position than even the brahman priests » [9]. Poets were the custodians of family memories and glorious events, which they used to recall by declaiming them in verses on great occasions. They also made up wedding-songs, poems and extempore compositions, during ceremonies, festivals or important events.

As with poetry, also painting was entrusted with the task of recording ancient glorious family events and of fixing important contemporary occurrences in black and white for posterity.

Painting, like most skills, was also handed down from father to son; furthermore, the favours granted by a king to an artist lasted easily for generations; because of that they were not less free to move around. Their wanderings allowed for an exchange of ideas and aesthetic experiences among different schools, which turned out to be particularly useful for a mutual renewal.

The *rājās*' interest also extended to building. A new ruler often added a wing or pavilion to his residence, competing in magnificence – for design and decoration – with previous structures and adopting new « fashions », as is the case with some decorations influenced by western taste: in the palace at Bikaner there is a cloister covered in Dutch majolica.

Their attention was also attracted to works of public interest, such as reservoirs, the construction of magnificent cenotaphs, and of temples, like the beautiful temple dedicated to Viṣṇu in his aspect of « Lord of the Universe » (*Jagadīśa*), which was built at Udaipur in 1651, by the Mahārāṇā Jagat Singh [10], or that of Jagat Śiromaṇijī, which was built at Amber in the 18th century by Man Singh's sister in memory of a dead brother and which, according to tradition, cost a real fortune.

Aspects of religious life [figs. 30-45]

Besides being the political leader of his people, the king was their spiritual head, too – it has been mentioned how Bapa Rawal Sisodia acquired the title of *dīvān*, viceroy of the god Śiva; therefore, his presence was essential in the numerous religious festivals and ceremonies which took place throughout the year. Their aim was also to demonstrate his power and his kingship and often one of these kept him busy for several days at a time. Even during periods of decadence

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and economic regression – like that caused by the Maratha invasions before the British took over – festivals were celebrated with the usual pomp and show and represented collective participation of the courtiers and the general public – as is related by Tod and Rousselet.

In accordance with the traditional calendar and with the change of seasons, festivals were divided into lunar and solar ones. Besides those common to all the Indian states, there were also regional festivals and those peculiar to different religious schools.

A grand festival, universally acknowledged all over India, is Holī, which is celebrated to herald the coming of Spring; its numerous rites and ceremonies have a symbolical meaning which is linked with the awakening of nature: for instance, the red powder which everyone throws at each other in the streets probably symbolizes blood, namely the energy of reawakening life. This festival is an expression of joy and a symbol of fertility (figs. 41-42).

During the days of Holī all kinds of licentiousness is allowed and, in the climate of a Bacchanalian orgy, everybody gives vent to his own repressed feelings with plays and jokes which, sometimes, reach the limit of vulgarity; the king himself, with his entire court, participates in the general mirth, and watches dance performances and carnival shows.

Rousselet's description gives a peep into the heart of the festival [1]: « Towards the middle of the month of Thalgun (Phāgun), the revels reach their climax. Troops of men and women, wreathed with flowers, and drunk with *bhang*, crowd the streets, carrying sacks full of a bright red vegetable powder. With this they assail the passers-by, covering them with clouds of dust, which soon dyes their clothes a startling colour. Groups of people stationed at the windows retaliate with the same projectiles, or squirt with wooden syringes red and yellow streams of water into the streets below... After this game has lasted a few days, the houses, trees, men, women and children are all dyed the same uniform colour ».

According to Tod [2], it was particularly spectacular watching the games of Holī from the palace terraces as they were played in clouds of coloured powder. Even horses and elephants partecipated in these games.

Among the numerous ceremonies performed during the days of the festival, there is also one in which the ruler gives fake swords, made of coconut and decorated with bright colours – *khaṇḍa nāriyal* – to the chiefs or to those to whom he wants to pay homage. This gift symbolizes the omens of the Spring season – personified by Gaurī, the goddess, not of death, but of life and prosperity. The festival ends with a big bonfire where « Holī is burnt » [3] along with the images of the deities that were worshipped the previous days, while dances and songs are performed all around until the morning, when after bathing everybody reverts to his every-day appearance and clothes. A solemn assembly of nobles (*dar'bār*) – as narrated by Rousselet [4] – brings the celebrations to a close in Mewar.

The festival of Gangor falls in the month of Caitra and is dedicated to the goddess Gaurī, namely Pārvatī, the protectress of women, hence of fertility and crops; in this period nature is in full bloom; Gaurī means « yellow » to indicate the colour of ripe wheat (figs. 36-37).

At the opening of the celebrations, processions of maids go singing through the streets of the town to pay homage to the goddess, bringing her offerings and asking the Mother for a spouse as ideal as hers (the god Īśvara, namely Śiva). A few days later, barley sprouts are planted in an appropriately prepared field: as soon as they shoot up, wives give them to their husbands who decorate their turbans with them. Clay statuettes of the goddess and of her consort are then purchased and, dressed in luxurious clothes, they are brought home for the daily offerings.

Eventually the festival reaches its climax and during these days Udaipur takes on a really spectacular aspect: a procession of magnificently adorned boats takes place on Lake Pichola, in the presence of all the people: « From the royal palace to the water's edge the terraces and towers are crowded with spectators; and the brilliantly dressed women, their hair adorned with roses and jessamine, throng the marble steps of the Tripoliya.

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It would be difficult to imagine a more joyous, and, at the same time, imposing scene than is presented by this eager and animated crowd. From the prince to the peasant, every face beams with pleasure » [5].

The statues of the goddess, carried in a procession by the women on their heads, are arranged in rows along the bank of the lake, where they are worshipped with offerings, songs and dances. On the last day, after a solemn *pūjā*, the clay statuettes are submerged in the lake and the ceremony ends with a show of fireworks.

Another festival dedicated to the goddess in her warlike and fearful aspect – Durgā – is Daśaharā, which also commemorates the god Rāma's expedition to Laṇka to free his spouse, Sītā, from the hands of the demon Rāvaṇa. This is the most important celebration and the one most deeply felt by the royal families of Rajputs, a warlike race « par excellence », and, consequently, it takes place with particular pomp (figs. 38-40).

The actual festival, which takes place in October, is preceded by ceremonies and rituals lasting 9 days – Nav'ratri. After this Daśaharā (*daśa* means ten) is celebrated, which is somehow related to war: the worship of the throne (*gaddī*), a symbol of royalty, of insignia, of swords and of weapons in general, of horses and of elephants, of the *śami* tree (*Prosopis spicigera*), which is sacred to the goddess, or the sacrifice of a buffalo, representing the demon Mahiṣāsura, the foe of the goddess whom she herself killed.

A sensational sight is that of the royal procession – at one time it was made up of about one hundred elephants – which winds through the city as far as the site marked for the ceremonies (*Daśaharā medān*). Shows are also chosen with reference to the theme of the festival, that is elephant or other animal fight and sporting competitions. The deity is saluted with volleys of rifles and guns. Ceremonies and processions are particularly magnificent and very colourful even – as Tod says – in the periods of decadence [6]: « The hilarity of the party, the diversified costume, the various forms, colours, and decorations of the turbans, in which some have the heron plume, or sprigs from some shrub sacred to the god of war; the clusters of lances, shining matchlocks, and black bucklers, the scarlet housing of the steeds, and waving pennons, recall forcibly the glorious days of the devote Sanga, or the immortal Pertap, who on such occasions collected round the black *changi* and crimson banner of Mewar a band of sixteen thousand of his own kin and clan, whose lives were their lord's and their country's ».

Divālī, the festival of lamps, is equally spectacular and picturesque. It is sacred to Lakṣmī, the goddess of welfare and prosperity, in whose honour the town is illuminated with thousands of lamps, which are placed at the doors of houses, on window-sills, in courtyards, while fireworks are played in front of each and every dwelling place in order to drive away the evil spirits. Everybody collects together all the jewels and money in his possession in order to worship it as a symbol of the goddess: on this festival, letting even a single penny go out of the house is regarded as an ill omen, whereas receiving one is a good one [7].

Some legends are associated with this celebration: it recalls Kṛṣṇa's destruction of a demon, or it celebrates Rāma's victory over the demon Rāvaṇa, or the liberation of Laksmī, a prisoner of the demon Bali, thanks to Vāmana (an incarnation of Viṣṇu).

The festival falls at the beginning of a new season – October-November – and therefore it is customary to clean and freshen up the houses, and to wear new clothes. As is also related by Rousselet [8], women throw the dust collected from their houses out of the windows shouting: « May sorrows and poverty go with you, and may the reign of Bali (that is to say, the era of prosperity) commence! ».

On the occasion of this festival, greetings and gifts are exchanged with neighbours, relatives and friends, and the night, illuminated by night-lights is spent gambling and worshipping the goddess together with her son Gaṇeśa, the god of fortune. (fig. 32). In preference to brahmans, who were rather mercenary and attached to mundane things, the *sādhus* or holy men, whose spiritual and moral superiority was universally acknowledged, were the spiritual guides to kings and their

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wives: the way of ascetism and renunciation which leads to a detached attitude towards life, also rendered them worthy of advising and suggesting solutions to matters of particular gravity, and often kings humbly undertook even long journeys in order to consult them; in the history of Rajasthan there are many instances in which the wise advice of a holy man influenced decisions of economic and political interest (figs. 44-45).

Because they are considered to be superior, in India all *sādhus* are generally the object of devotion, even those who through special techniques of ascetism – fakirs – have only reached sensational exterior control of their body. Their extraordinary exercises were a source of curiosity and the « magical » powers obtained by some through the yoga discipline could even arouse some fear; therefore one took great care to avoid irritating such persons so as not to incur their anger.

Rousselet [9] relates how he witnessed an exceptional feat accomplished by a fakir who, for a few pennies, spent several hours every morning for a whole month hanging from a tree by his feet without his face showing any sign of discomfort for the unusual position.

Important moments in the life of a king were the religious ceremonies which were performed first thing in the morning before sunrise, and also during the day both in the chapel of the palace and in front of the small altars of the deities situated in his private apartments (figs. 30-31).

The rituals were rather complex and they included rites of internal purification, through the ingestion of water and breathing exercises, and external purification, consisting in a daily bath; for such operations, as can also be seen in the miniatures (fig. 7), they used to wear the practical *dhotī* instead of the more cumbersome Mogul clothes. Then followed moments of meditation, prayer and reading of sacred texts. The offering to the god consisted in laying at his feet flowers, money or food, that is fruits, sweets, and a mixture made of five ingredients (*pañcāmṛta*): milk, yogurt, sugar, butter and honey.

In his turn the god was also purified with ablutions or splashes of water; the sacred circumambulation (*pradakṣiṇā*) was also performed around him, or around his shrine – if the structure of the building allowed for this. The king himself, or the brahman, marked his forehead with an auspicious sign (*tilak*) using coloured powder.

Visiting places of pilgrimage was regarded as a very meritorious act, whether on the occasion of festivities connected with the temple itself, or in order to ask for the god's protection or help on some important occasion.

Pushkar, near Ajmer, is one of the most famous and most ancient of the sacred places in India and for over two thousand years it has been the object of devotion for pilgrims coming from all over. The lake, lying in the valley and bearing the same name, is said to have appeared at the same time as the lotus flower which fell from Brahmā's hands. Numerous temples, dwellings and hostels for pilgrims, and flights of steps leading to the water for the sacred ablutions have been built around it: here, is also the only temple dedicated to Brahmā still extant in India.

During the yearly pilgrimage, kings used to perform the traditional ceremony called *tulādān*: sitting on scales, they used to give their weight in gold and precious stones to the temple, for charity. (fig. 19).

Rousselet relates how a ruler of Jaipur, the rival of the king of Jodhpur in war and love, had openly made fun of the scanty offerings of the latter, who was the head of an undoubtedly poorer state, being for the most part a semi-desert. Offended by such a haughty attitude, accepting the challenge issued by his rival, the Rathor king decreed that all the lands occupied by brahmans in his state should be given to them. Just in time a wise minister restrained the Rājā of Jaipur from making new donations which would have ruined the state [10].

By virtue of the offerings from kings and devotees, generally all places of pilgrimage were particularly wealthy, and consequently brahmans, who administered estates and furthermore enjoyed special privileges, such as, for instance, tax exemption, exerted

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considerable political and economic power over the area. The sacred compound could also enjoy particular immunities: for example, the temple at Nathdvara, in which a particularly sacred image of Kṛṣṇa was kept, was a refuge for murderers and criminals, who could not be caught there. Zalim Singh, the regent of Kotah, is related to have threatened to wall up the entrance to the temple in order to compel an enemy to surrender (fig. 43) [11].

We have already mentioned the temple of Ekaliṅga, the god of the universe, the protector of Mewar, which is still famous to this day. There Śiva is worshipped in his primordial phallic form, on the top of which are carved the four faces of the god.

Women and love [figs. 46-67]

Rajput women, like men, were also subject to an iron code of honour and bravery but they had the added categorical imperative of fidelity and loyalty towards their husbands, even after death. Being brought up in conformity with strict morals, bound to tradition and guided by glorious examples which conditioned their pattern of life as well as that of their death, Rajput princesses led very retired lives; they did not take part in social and political life in any way, even if they possibly inspired it occasionally through their ascendancy over a ruler.

« Accursed the day when a woman child was born to me » [1]. On her birth, a woman was received as a misfortune, in the palaces of nobles as well as in the houses of the poor. In fact, in order to marry, she had to be provided with a considerable dowry, the value of which was worked out on the basis of her caste and rank. Marriages of female offspring often caused the actual breakdown of estates and the economic ruin of many families: « the reputation of the lineage » in fact, was more important than any economic problem. Furthermore, for nobles and royal families, a rich dowry was a matter of honour and a display of power which would result in bards immortalizing their names by singing the pomp of the wedding. The contrary would have been a cause for derision and terrible satire. The bard Chund said: « The Dahima emptied his coffers on the marriage of his daughter with Pirthiraj (*sic*); but he filled them with the praises of mankind » [2]. The killing of new-born females was hence a common practice.

A woman's life depended on the man to whom she belonged: she was in danger of being killed at birth and had to die on the passing away of her husband; the ideal of fidelity towards her husband did not allow her survival after his death; social conditioning, the sense of honour and traditions that exalted incidents of great courage shown by women in the past, compelled them to seek death. The word *raṇḍ*, widow, was a synonym for shame and cowardice.

The *jōhar* rite has a religious origin and was hence regarded as sacred, and the women who practised it were the object of great veneration and respect: Satī, the god Īśvara's consort, in protest against her father's irreverent attitude towards her spouse, first set the example of flinging herself into the fire. She did this so that, by the god's will, she could be reborn as the goddess Pārvatī and could thus join her husband for ever.

Bernier [3] relates a tragic episode which he witnessed during his trip through Rajasthan. A dead man lay on a wood pyre; a woman sat beside him; a few brahmans moved about while five women, holding hands, sang and danced. After a while the funeral pyre was set alight and, as it had been liberally smeared with butter and oil, at once it was enveloped in flames. The woman's face, though an immediate prey to the flames, did not show any signs of pain or fear. However, the tragedy was not over. The other five women, the servants of the wretched woman who was burning alive, kept on dancing and flung themselves into the fire to follow their mistress to death.

A female child, however, could also be an excellent item of trade for political alliances. Except for the Sisodias of Mewar, the other *rajas* condescended to allow their princesses to marry Mogul emperors, despite the strict religious rule that forbade them to join in mar-

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riage with people belonging to a different caste and religion. The first union between a Rajput princess of the Kachhwaha clan with the emperor Akbar was looked upon with horror by the other clans.

First dependent on their family, then on their husband – to whom they were often betrothed from birth – princesses, but for rare exceptions, spent their lives secluded in a wing of the palace which was allotted to women (*zanānā*) (from the Persian word *zan*, meaning « woman »), where all men, except the king, were forbidden access. The first wife enjoyed particular privileges and usually ruled over the others. Not completely lacking in education – princess Mirabai of Kishangarh is one of India's great mystical poetesses [4] – they spent their monotonous lives in rather a limited space, unseen, looking at the world through the open-work windows of their palaces. The king of Jaipur, Sawāī Pratap Singh (1779-1803), in order to allow his women to watch the religious processions, festivals and performances taking place in the main streets of the town, built a palace called « the Palace of Winds », which consisted only of a false front with several lattice-windows, that could be reached by stairs and galleries. Sheltered in palanquins, women could go to temples, places of pilgrimage and visit holy men (figs. 63-67).

Even though in some miniatures princesses are depicted as taking part in hunts (fig. 61) or as playing polo [5], their usual setting is still the *zanānā* or the palace gardens, where they are portrayed listening to music, playing the *sitār*, writing (fig. 57), or engaged in some other pastime, such as painting or taming pigeons and doves (fig. 56); most of their time was presumably devoted to dressing, and donning jewels, with the help of their maids (figs. 52-53).

With reference to clothes, princess Haravati of Kotah, the wife of Jai Singh of Amber, is said to have been teased because of her provincial dresses; the king himself once jokingly took a pair of scissors, to cut them up. Hence, wounded in her pride, she fiercely brandished a sword and said « that in the house to which she had the honour to belong, they were not habituated to jests of this nature; that mutual respect was the guardian, not only of happiness but of virtue ». She then warned the king that had he ever again attempted to behave so rudely, he would have seen that the daughter of Kotah could use the sword better than the king could use scissors [6].

Flying kites was commonly practised by both men and women of all age and status, and it still is one of the most common pastimes, especially at Jaipur and Jodhpur (fig. 59). A veritable kite « science », which developed into a very sophisticated « combat » technique, resulted. In fact the game consists of using the sharp blades and points which are inserted on the front and the sides of what appears to be a harmless flying object, to knock down the opposing kites.

There are many episodes in the history of Rajasthan that illustrate women's pride and courage, and these constitute a worthy paragon of spiritual strength for men, too.

A princess of Udaipur, the wife of Jaswant Singh Rathor (1635-78), shut her husband out of the palace, on his return from a defeat suffered fighting against Aurangzeb. « Win or die » was the princess's resolute answer, and in order to urge her husband to heroic action, she prepared the funeral pyre. She was dissuaded from her purpose only many days later, when she was assured that the king would set up another army to confront the enemy [7].

There is another story about a princess of Bundi who is said to have exulted at the news of her son's heroic death in battle [8].

The Rajput woman's attitude of utter devotion and submission to her consort is expressed by the passionate words which the Rajput princess Sunjogta addressed to her lord, king Prithviraj Chauhan, urging him to fight against the invader Muhammad Ghauri (1192) and die, certain as she was that they would meet soon again « in the sun region » [9]: « Victory and fame to my lord, oh, sun of the Chohans, in glory, or in pleasure, who has tasted so deeply as you? To die is the destiny not only of man, but of the gods... Think not of self, but of immortality... Who asks woman for advice?... even when truths issue from their lips, none listen

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thereto. Yet, what is the world without woman?... Yet woman shares your joys and your sorrows... Hunger and thirst we cheerfully partake with you; we are as the lakes, of which you are the swans; what are you when absent from our bosoms? ». For days the princess waited for her husband's return, living only on water and, on the news of his death, she bravely went to the pyre.

The pride, dignity and courage of Rajput princesses once again come to the fore in the following story. The queen of Ganore was compelled to open the gates of her last fortress to the enemy, the king of Bhopal, who was charmed by her beauty and who asked her to marry him. Consequently she requested him to allow her a few hours to prepare for the wedding and in the meantime she sent him a valuable garment as a gift. Magnificently adorned, the princess appeared before the king who was waiting on the palace terrace to start the ceremony, and in a resolute and proud manner she spoke thus: « Know, Khan, that your last hour is come; our wedding and our death shall be sealed together. The vestments which cover you are poisoned, you had left me no other expedient to escape pollution » and, reaching the top of the terraces, she leaped to her death from the height of the palace [10].

Miniatures, like poetry, rather than depicting the reserved and secluded female world from real life, suggest the image of an ideal woman, just as she was evoked and wished for in poetry, transporting her into a world of fairy-tales which is not contaminated by anything worldly. Consequently a conventional model of female beauty is created and this is only occasionally related to reality (the only female portrait known of is that of Jahangir's wife): this ideal expresses delicacy, grace and sensual joy, and is depicted in paintings with rich and vibrant outlines, and bright, warm colours. The facial expressions, however, are vacant, while the pathos of feelings is « suggested » by the movements of the figures, by the occasionally exaggerated positions of the head and arms, and by the surrounding atmosphere (figs. 52-55; 102-103).

In Hindu tradition, the ideal of woman is trasferred to the religious sphere and is represented by Sīta, or Rādhā, the faithful spouses and lovers « par excellence », who have also become the spiritual symbol for the soul in quest of God; but adversity and sorrow are prerequisites for this quest.

The world of women in its most heavenly and rarefied aspect is magnificently expressed in the *Rāgamālās*, or in the *Śṛṅgāras* – collections of miniatures depicting love themes – where feelings, although clearly comprehensible, are never shown as passions of a psychological and personal kind, but are crystallized in well-defined moments and ideal models, in complete harmony and fusion with the surrounding nature, which is part and parcel of the very feelings to the point of emphasizing them.

Love, captured in its most elementary aspects, without any psichological complications, means being close to one's man; sensual and joyful physical contact, it becomes the focus of everything a woman does and is the point of reference for all her thoughts: as miniatures show, she experiences the thrilling delight and anxiety of an encounter, expresses languor and nostalgic melancholy for his prolonged absence and gives free course to her desperation and sorrow for being forsaken and neglected, surrounded by solicitous maids who try to comfort her. All the hours of the day appear to be devoted to him; she languidly listens to music by moonlight, or plays a love song thinking of him; in painting, it is his image which she portrays. Furthermore pets, particularly birds, become friends to whom to confide her pains, seeking comfort for her solitude; she asks them to sing when her loved one arrives.

In Mirabai's poetical words a woman offers herself as « a slave for (his) feet » and declares that « without (him) she is a life without life » and « that she spends the night in a state of agony and anxiety; the pain of love gnaws at her heart » to the extent of making her cry, « to whom shall I talk? who will listen to me? oh, my spouse, put out the fire of my pains by coming to me ».

This passionate love, exclusive as it is, can turn the images of languid and romantic women into those of

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fearless and brave heroines, ready, as stories and legends tell, to overcome the most arduous trials in order to become united with their loved one, even defying firm rules and social and religious institutions. They also undergo strict periods of austerities or carry out magical-religious practices in order to acquire powers or to gain sexual superiority over the other wives.

Love for a woman means uncertainty, anxiety, transience; for a man, on the other hand, as is shown by the paintings, it signifies rest, evasion, entertainment; a moment in a day usually filled with other activities and interests.

With only a few exceptions, the opportunity offered to kings of having several wives and numerous concubines made the relation with women superficial and fragile (figs. 46-51). Although they seldom reach high standards of quality, erotic scenes, which are also fairly common in Rajasthani paintings, are minutely descriptive and represent the moment of the fulfilment of desire and the quest of a mere voluptuous game; however, they are never vulgar, notwithstanding the stark nakedness and unlikely positions of the figures.

In painting, just as in poetry, woman is, therefore, basically thought of as a « lover » waiting for her beloved. Maternity is seldom depicted, even if there is no lack of miniatures with scenes of babies being delivered or, less crudely, showing the birth of some important person; this event is traditionally attended by the astrologers who have the task of searching the stars to foretell the way of the newborn.

Children are depicted in only a few paintings; they enjoyed no consideration at all, at least until the age of their education and military training; after childhood, which was spent in the *zanānā*, they were separated from their mothers and were brought up by wet-nurses, servants and teachers; none the less, the mother's task was to watch over the very life of her son – if there was a possibility of his being an heir – against manoeuvres and attempts at his life by his half-brothers, wives other than his mother, or concubines of the king.

Rājās and their entertainments [figs. 68-90]

In their moments of freedom from their duties in war and in state administration, from political and religious tasks, kings devoted themselves to sports and entertainment, which they organized with great generosity, sharing them not only with their court and guests, but often with the general public, too. Many performances were arranged on the occasion of religious festivals or particular celebrations and commanded a general attendance.

Theatre and dance performances, or even both genres together, were rather frequent at the court (figs. 73-75); they usually enacted stories and plays related to Hindu tradition, particulars drawn from the life of Kṛṣṇa, based on the classics (*Gīta Govinda, Bhāgavata, Harivaṃśa Purāṇa, Kṛṣnalīla*) (fig. 74), on epics, and on texts of poetry, such as *Rāgamālās, Bārah'māsās, Ratikalā*, and *Rasikapriyā* which, as we shall see later, deal with love in its manifold aspects and they have been a source of inspiration for miniatures, too. Furthermore, there were also performances of plays, such as *Śakuntalā*, and romantic and heroic tales drawn from local traditions, having gallant princes, such as Amar Singh Rathor and Prithviraj Chauhan, and legendary figures, such as Dhola Maru, as their leading characters (fig. 108).

From the miniatures reproducing such performances it is possible to a certain extent to form an idea of this kind of art, of the dance costumes, postures and movements, and often it is even possible to determine the subject which was being depicted.

Shows of jugglers, snake-charmers and animal tamers, as well as those of acrobatics, half-way between gymnastics and dancing, were also part of performances (figs. 16; 80).

These vagrant artists were usually welcome to courts and were an attraction for all the townsfolk on the occasion of religious celebrations or particular festivals.

One of the most common shows, as narrated by Rousselet [1], consisted in doing contortion exercises with swords and knives, on the top of a pole; grue-

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some and cruel shows were performed by half naked young girls lifting weights by their eyes... « a metal button is placed under each eyelid, in such a manner as to adhere to the very pupils of the eyes; and to these buttons strings are attached, connected with weights, sometimes very heavy, which the child lifts in this way some little height from the ground, without using her hands. If the trick lasts a minute tears may be seen running down the strings ». The same girls then used to roll up « like balls », bending backwards, they used to pick up straws on the ground with their eyes, or blindfolded thread a needle with their toes.

On the occasion of festivals, vagrants themselves set up a kind of fun-fair, with merry-go-rounds and big revolving wheels which were very much appreciated by the *rājās* themselves, as may be seen from the miniatures (figs. 68; 72).

The taste for novelty also prompted *rājās* to give hospitality to guests from the East and from the West, who exhibited themselves in their shows raising interest and appreciation. Western clothing, and European fashion in general, was a source of curiosity for painters, too, as it is shown by some miniatures and sketches (fig. 76).

Wrestling matches were also a kind of collective show. Sometimes the protagonists were even women; the abundant documentation on this sport shows that it has roused much interest since at least the 7th century A.D. In order to prove their skill, wrestlers often performed acrobatics, too; miniatures show them climbing a perfectly smooth pole (*stambhaśrama*), from which they descend head down. Such an exercise is depicted in the *Deśākhya rāgā* or *rāgiṇī* and was done in order to prove the male or female protagonist's physical, hence sexual, superiority over rivals (figs. 62; 80).

Matches between wrestlers (*pahal'vāns*) were often gruesome and the growing fury of wrestlers greatly excited the spirits of the crowd and the king himself who, according to Rousselet [2], « with wild eyes and the veins of his neck swollen, surveys the scene with such passionate excitement that he cannot remain quiet, but imitates by gestures the movements of the wrestlers » (fig. 80). He personally followed the preparations for the show and carefully chose his athletes; wrestlers coming from Travancore and Punjab were particularly famous: their muscles were exceptionally developed as they practised this sport since their childhood.

A bloodier form of wrestling was « wrestling with claws », *nukka ki kuśtī*, which was performed with a sort of sharp-pointed iron first, which could even cause the death of a wrestler. It was only in the last century that iron was replaced by bone (fig. 41).

Fights between animals of the same species – elephants, horses, cocks, buffaloes –, between different species – rhino and buffalo, buffalo and tiger, ass and hyena – or else fights between man and animal were also frequently organized (figs. 86-90). Such shows took place in a specially-built enclosure with high walls, provided with passages and balconies for the spectators, whereas a turret with a dome-covered booth was usually reserved for the king; numerous small doors opened along the walls to allow attendants to go in and out without being followed by beasts.

The fight between two elephants was spectacular. During the months prior to the fight a special diet got them into a state of excitement and inebriation, called *mast*; then they were infuriated in the arena by the reckless *sāṭ'mārivālās* – akin to Spanish *picadores* – with spears, whips and red cloths; whenever necessary in order to defend any rash person who went too close to it, others had the task of frightening the animal with long poles on the top of which fireworks were fixed (figs. 88-90).

The violence of the fight, as related by Rousselet [3], was terrible; elephants used their trunks as weapons with which they gave very violent blows on their opponent. The crucial moment was when one of the two, being more tired, decided to charge the other, but in order to do that it had to turn to gain speed, thus exposing its side, at the risk of being consequently easily overcome either by a blow from the tusk or by being knocked over. Then the uproar of the crowd reached its peak, and the bets multiplied. Then the winner had to fight against man. *Sāṭ'māris* invaded the pitch with

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loud cries and, with their spears, they excited the elephant which chased them furiously, showing a surprising nimbleness and cunning. After some time spent in such frantic pursuits, a trumpet blast signalled the « picadores » to disappear, and they were replaced by a man on horseback, who in his turn started the joust with matchless dexterity (fig. 89).

Fights between two rhinos were also particularly thrilling and exciting, as Rousselet relates [4]: « Horn against horn, they exchange passes, as though fencing with swords, until one succeeds in passing his horn beneath the head of his antagonist, which is their vulnerable spot. The animal, therefore, who finds himself in this predicament suddenly turns, so that the point of the enemy's horn rests against his jaw-bone, instead of penetrating his throat. They remain in this position, motionless, for some minutes, then separate, and one of them takes to flight. For a whole hour the fight is many times renewed with increasing fury; their horns clashing together with a great noise, their enormous lips covered with foam, and their foreheads stained with blood. Their attendants surround them, and throw buckets of water over them to refresh them, so that they may sustain the combat ».

Also the buffalo flies into a terrible rage and its wide horns are a formidable and fearful weapon even against the tigers (fig. 86).

Archery was first among the sports that kings preferred, both as a kind of show and because they participated in it directly; It has a long historical and literary tradition in India. The bow of Arjuna, one of the five heroes in the *Mahābhārata*, and that of the king Prithviraj Chauhan are as famous as Ulysses' bow in our own cultural tradition (figs. 81-82).

The bows and arrows, made of wood, metal or bone, according to the social status of the user, were a precious gift to young people still in their tender age, and training in their use was an important stage in the upbringing of princes; in order to practise that sport, in fact, one needed not only muscular strength, but dexterity and power of concentration as well. Particular attention was also paid to learning the use of the rifle and of the sword; furthermore, demonstrations of javelin-throwing, on horseback or on foot, were a cause of honour and pride to youths (fig. 83).

Rajputs, being excellent horsemen, also willingly played polo, a Persian game which was introduced by the earliest Islamic invaders; it has a long-standing tradition in India.

Some miniatures show how this sport was practised by women, too.

Card games (*gañjīfā*), dice and chess were among the favourite pastimes of *rājās* and princesses, above all during the rainy season (figs. 77-79). During the siege of Ontala – a fort located between Udaipur and Chitor – by the Rajputs desirous of winning back their possession, on entering the fort the besiegers are said to have found two Muslim Indians who calmly went on playing chess; when they finally saw themselves surrounded by their enemies, they unconcernedly asked their leader to be allowed to end the game. In other times similar bravery would have saved their lives; on that occasion it was not so, because the Rajputs remembered how Muslims had slaughtered their people, and so, after the game was over, the two men were killed [5].

The game called *cōpār* or *pacīsī*, the *gyān cōpār*, « snakes and ladder », in English, similar to the Italian « gioco dell'oca » with pictures of Indian deities and temples, is typically Indian [6] (figs. 39; 78; 100).

Hunting [figs. 91-98]

Hunting (*śikāra*) was the favourite pastime of the Rajputs. Owing to their adventurous disposition, they felt the need to confront danger, even in the rare times of peace: tigers, lions, bears, panthers were their most sought after matches; although such beasts were challenged from the top of elephants, or from some shelter built for that purpose, bravery and contempt of danger were always required in order to kill them. They also extensively hunted boars, hyenas and jackals, wild dogs, hares, antelopes, deer, wild fowl (partridges, ducks, hawks, quails) and even crocodiles.

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The tiger, however, was always the most sought after animal; killing it was an exclusive privilege of the king, who only exceptionally granted others permission to hunt it.

Every court had a « Hunting Department » – *śikāra kār'khānā* – which employed a large staff – over 500 in Mewar – with « full-time » wages. On the occasion of important hunts, more than 2,000 assistants (beaters for example) were further recruited and it required a small army of attendants and many days of preparation to organize them. Quick links with even far off places, essential to the success of a hunt, were established through a system of visual telegraph, using large flags or a series of solar mirrors by day, and torches or big fires by night. Such system was in use in Mewar until 1962, the year when the privileges of Mahārājās were abolished.

The king decided the kind of hunting he wished to practise, however always keeping in mind the mating seasons of the various species: shooting females was generally avoided. A beat could also be organized after the presence of a tiger or of a lion had been reported in a particular area. Furthermore, there were big annual hunts, for which astrologers decided the most favourable day; they were attended by the whole court, kings of neighbouring states and, occasionally, important foreign guests, too. Gamekeepers and beaters were always present at the most suitable places and had the task of rousing the game; true experts in the habits of animals, they were able to identify the species and sex even just from the tracks on the ground.

Small hunting castles and lodges – shelter for the king – or more simply turrets, where he could stay comfortably waiting for game, were built all over the territory. About 200 can be counted in the territory of Mewar alone. Furthermore, if the terrain did not permit the use of elephants, shelters built on trees were prepared. If the place chosen for a big beat happened to be far from the palace, a camp was arranged several days in advance.

Rousselet's description provides a clear picture of the yearly hunt of the Mahārāṇā of Udaipur, which took place on the Aravalli range [1]. The preparation was long and meticulous: all those taking part had to provide themselves with complex equipment consisting of at least three tents: one for sleeping, one for eating and one for living in comfortably; furthermore, they had to be luxuriously furnished – a replica of their usual dwelling. Hence carpets and furniture, as well as knick-knacks, pictures, valuable crockery and even some books, which had to appear to have been carelessly left on the furniture could not be lacking. The camp occupied a vast area and, with the 3,000 people crowding it, it took on the aspect of a small town.

On the opening of the hunt – as described by Rousselet – the king mounted a richly harnessed elephant, surrounded by high dignitaries, by nobles of his court and by guests, all riding elephants, while minstrels recited poems composed for the occasion, waving large palm branches decorated with roses. The master of the hunt, riding a camel, directed the operations. The magnificent and colourful procession moved towards the forests. Then the king chose from among the guests those who would have the honour of hunting by his side. Frightened by the beaters' shouts, the boars came out of the bushes and were immediately shot down. That was followed by the phase of hunting called *haṅkavā*. The Rāṇā and his companions settled down in a small fortalice, generally built at the entrance to a gorge so that hunters could control its narrow access. They waited for the game, sitting comfortably on soft sofas, drinking champagne or beer. All kinds of animals were chased towards the gorge by the beaters. When their shouts came closer, the forest around the fortalice came alive and started moving, and in a short while there was chaos: hundreds of boars, jackals, hyenas, wild dogs broke into the space facing the tower, from which uninterrupted firing broke out; rifles were promptly reloaded by attendants.

In the end there was a true carnage: scores of animals lay on the ground in dreadful disarray. They were put on litters, built by the beaters, and triumphally carried to the camp. That evening, in order to celebrate the end of the first day, the Rāṇā offered a big dinner which lasted throughout the night, amidst music and

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dances, jugglers' shows and fireworks. The writer also notes that the conversation of the Rāṇā was pleasant; as a good connoisseur of animals, he entertained his guests talking about the habits of various animals and of his own experiences in so many years of hunting.

As is often related, and even depicted in some miniatures, accidents causing the death of some beater or hunter were not infrequent.

Again Rousselet talks about a mishap of which he himself was the protagonist [2]. The magnificent elephant on which he was riding was frightened by an unexpected shot fired at a panther, and started running away into the woods, destroying everything in its way. Only the skill of his guide could avert a disaster.

The pursuit of a wounded animal is also dangerous: only the person who wounded it has the right to kill it, hence he is compelled to leave the group in order to follow the tracks of the beast, venturing alone into the jungle.

Hunting was not just a sport; it was a social event of great importance; through the display of his wealth everybody – and first and foremost the king – vied to show off his prestige and his power and authority.

Being keen on this sport, all *rājās* took special care in the choice of the most suitable rifles and weapons for killing the various types of animals: swords, daggers, sabres were then often made precious by gold, silver, ivory and jade inlay work, showing hunting scenes. All royal families boasted of their own collections of hunting weapons, particularly rifles, which were required in great number.

Also horses and dogs were chosen with great care: they were often animals of great value and beauty, even coming from distant countries (fig. 84).

Elephants were huge and well looked after. In front of the palace at Udaipur there are three large circular open spaces, where the pachyderms used to rest, lying down waiting for the king. The harness for horses and elephants was made of valuable fabrics and hides set with precious stones; the clothes were equally elegant and magnificent, as the miniatures show.

Hunting techniques varied according to the kind of animal. The presence of a tiger was generally reported by the hunting staff; occasionally, if it was a « man-eater » – tigers attack man only if wounded, or when they are old and no longer have the strength to get food by other means – the report might have come from some out-of-the-way village.

The place was surrounded by beaters who, with the help of various percussion instruments and dogs, made a big noise which drove the animal towards the king. The tiger is said to be rather dangerous if wounded or when a female feels her cubs are in danger, for it may then directly attack the elephant. Mr. Dhayabhai Tulsinath Singh Tanwar, the director of the Hunting Department of the Mahārāṇā of Udaipur, who served the last three Rāṇās – tells how a tigress was made furious by the killing of the male by Bhopal Singh and she hurled herself at the elephant, knocking down the kornak. Realizing the danger, Dhayabhai himself jumped off his mount and frightened the animal away, just in time, as she was about to attack the unfortunate kornak. A similar scene is reproduced in a miniature now on display in the palace at Udaipur.

The present Mahārāṇā remembers how a wounded tiger managed to escape by leaping over the beaters' heads. The rocks where it sought shelter were scorching hot because of the sun, but the poor beast withstood that ordeal, too, only to be miserably killed by a second deadly shot. The beast's paws showed the marks of the scalds caused by the rocks.

In panther-hunting the animal was baited with a goat for several days to get it to return to the same place.

Antelopes are shy and very fearful, and consequently they are very difficult to get close to, without their running away at high speed. The hunter had learnt the skill of getting within close shooting range by using a mare, the presence of which did not worry the animal, as a shield in order not to be detected. This technique is often depicted in miniatures.

Hawking – which originates from Persia – was also widely practised. Falcons were trained with great care and were a cause of pride to royal families and were the object of precious gifts (fig. 61).

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As mentioned earlier, the presence of a guest, be he another *rājā* or a foreigner, provided the pretext for a beat, in order to impress him with the magnificence and perfection of its organization. The desire to show one's power through pomp on the one hand, and bravery on the other, is made clear by the words with which the Moghul ruler Jahangir, welcomed prince Karan, the son of the Rāṇā of Mewar, to his court [3].

In his honour the emperor organized a beat – which seems to have been depicted in a miniature, too – which was not without suspence, because the elephant mounted by the king was frightened at the sight of the lioness and started getting restless. Despite this, however, the emperor shot the beast right between the eyes, and was consequently warmly congratulated by prince Karan. Later Jahangir himself thus wrote in his journal: « God Almighty did not allow me to be ashamed before the prince, and as I had agreed, I shot her in the eye » [4].

Western writers emphasize the love for hunting of many kings and their skill in that sport; it was often their chief occupation. Col. Tod [5] relates how Bishan Singh (1772-1821), king of Bundi, « found in the pleasures of the chase the only stimulus befitting a Rajpoot. He would bivouac for days in the lion's lair, nor quit the scene until he had circumvented the forest king, the only prey he deemed worthy of his skill. He had slain upwards of one hundred lions with his own hand, besides many tigers, and boars innumerable had been victims to his lance. In this noble pastime, not exempt from danger, and pleasurable in proportion to the toil, he had a limb broken, which crippled him for life, and shortened his stature, previously below the common standard ».

Still today those who knew the penultimate Mahārāṇā, Fateh Singh, tell of his hunting exploits. Even if unhappy, and virtually living in a wheel chair, in Lord Curzon's words, he spent his simple and exemplary life assiduously looking after his people's interests [6], with hunting, which he practised assiduously, as his only pastime, as may be gathered from the numerous miniatures on this theme portraying him as the protagonist.

Since the killing of numerous animals was a cause of great pride for the Rajput kings, hunting trophies, such as tiger and lion skins, bear heads, antelope horns, boar fangs, were and still are part of the decoration in their palaces.

The miniatures which kings ordered court painters to paint were also souvenirs of the hunt. The artists followed the royal procession, drew a few sketches of the landscape, of the people taking part in the beat, and of the kill, fixing on paper some of the salient moments of the day, which were then reproduced on the same painting as if they all occurred at the same time.

These miniatures show great « realism » in their description; one can easily identify the place where the related events occurred, while the simultaneous repetition of two or more episodes, placed in a space « fragmented » by several unlikely perspectives, creates a long « reading » time. Not being used to painting from life, artists invented new spatial solutions with great imagination and freedom of expression: with fresh naïvety, in order to reproduce the rising and falling of slopes, they emphasized the slant of the figures, which thus appear to be poised precariously on the ground, sometimes even floating in the air. The shifting of the angle-shot of figures succeeds in giving an accurate and very immediate idea of the confusion and movement of hunters and beasts, in spite of the lack of logic of their positions (figs. 98).

The horizon is always very high, so as to leave as much room as possible for representations.

Sometimes side figures, which should be shown at an angle, are surprisingly depicted not only completely, but at angle of ninety degrees with respect to the frontal plan; this creates an apparently absurd confusion of perspective compelling the beholder to take another side of the miniature as a visual standpoint, if he wants to see it properly (fig. 43).

Encomiastic portraits, instead, were based on simplified Moghul models. The king, recognizable by somatic characteristics or features – his name was often written behind the miniature, or on its surrounding borders –

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appears, galloping on his horse, in the act of fearlessly killing his quarry with a sword (fig. 94).

The places which were morphologically most suitable for game were some areas in Mewar, and especially the region of Bundi and Kotah. Therefore, hunting was particularly common in those two states; at the same time the taste for miniatures on this subject, which came to be typical of both schools and which show an unmistakable style, became widespread: the coarseness and simplification of the figures of animals and men, which are often outlined quickly and given exaggerated proportions with respect to the landscape, are countered by an extreme liveliness in the interpretation of the movements of the animals themselves, which look lively and vigorous, as a result, and by a great freedom and imagination in depicting the luxuriance and lush variety of vegetation. Another characteristic is the red-lac border surrounding the composition (figs. 91-92).

Mewar miniatures with hunting scenes, often of a considerable size (reaching up to one and a half metres in length by 60-70 cm. in height), are executed with the greatest care for details and aim at a circumstantial description of events. The camp built for the king and his guests, or the town or palace situated near the place of the beat, are also often depicted.

Not only painters, but also poets were entrusted with the task of recording the most important hunting incidents. Their descriptions were preceded by verses in praise of the king who on that occasion gave proof of bravery and skill.

The collections of miniatures of the Rājās [figs. 99-108]

The painting of miniatures originally began with the aim of illustrating texts, and only later it became independent of these, depicting religious as well as secular subjects, the meaning of which was understood by all because of the use of well-known iconographic and symbolic elements and patterns of composition. These artistic creations, often making up a set, were collected in albums.

Moghul emperors – Akbar in particular – had already created a highly prestigious art school, where calligraphers and painters worked together. Grand undertakings were conceived and carried out by Akbar and often completed by his successors, who followed in the great emperor's footsteps; suffice it to remember the edition of the *Hamzanāmā*, consisting of 1,400 pages.

Rajput kings were also fond of collecting illuminated manuscripts and albums, which were regarded as prestigious gifts for wives and concubines, as well as for other *rājās* (fig. 99). A primary source of inspiration were Indian epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhāgavadgītā*, the sacred book « par excellence » of Hindus, and some *Purāṇas* – such as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* – and furthermore texts connected with Kṛṣṇa's life, such as the *Gītāgovinda*, the *Rasamañjarī* (15th century) (fig. 101), the *Rasikapriyā* (16th century). In the latter ones in particular artists picked out the human and earthly aspects of the god's deeds, translating them into terms of daily life and thus making the way to salvation through *bhakti*, namely devotion, easily accessible to everybody (fig. 106).

The love of the divine couple Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa even in its sexual and erotic aspects – let us remember the importance which Hindu religion attaches to the principle of creation – is often depicted in painting, as well as exalted in poetry because of its symbolic meanings, because, through the bliss of the flesh, eternal bliss can be reached by the act of union – a precise parallelism between physical and spiritual experience. Thus, as we read in the *Gītāgovinda*: « While I free your breasts from all their ornaments, I relieve our hearts, wounded by absence. In order to put out the fire of my passion, rest your breasts on my chest; let them weigh on me, round and full like jars... In order to assert her victory, Rādhā made her lover lie down and triumphantly rose above him for a long time » [1].

The iconographic themes in the depiction of the god's loves merge and get mixed up with other love themes of a secular kind, as in the paintings which draw their inspiration from collections of poems such as *Rāgamālās, Bārah'māsās and Śṛṅgāras* – which will be

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mentioned later – and with scenes depicting court life; sometimes the king embodies Kṛṣṇa himself, and he is depicted as such.

Also albums on *rāgas* – *Rāgamālās*, namely « Garlands of *ragas* » – were found extensively in Rajput courts (figs. 102-105). The idea of *rāga* – meaning « colour » and more particularly red – derives from music and indicates a musical composition the sequence, form and structure of which have a particular meaning, aiming at conjuring up a state of mind connected with love. Says the wise man Matanga Muni (5th century): « *Rāga* is the musical composition which with help of rising and falling notes has the effect of colouring the heart of man »[2]. In painting *Rāgamālās* are the graphic description of feelings expressed by music and are often accompanied by poetical verses which contribute to conjure up the atmosphere and emotions of love – waiting, seeking one's beloved, desperation, joy of the meeting. The feelings are embodied by divine heroes – music in India being considered of divine origin – who, according to popular tradition, are divided into six groups, each including a male character (*rāga*) with six wives (*rāgiṇīs*) who correspond to different musical themes.

Although tradition has by now codified such representations – which are repeated with only a few variations – they are not always easily discernible to Western eyes; the symbolism of the objects depicted is also accompanied by the symbolism of the postures and movements of the body: in the *Kakubhā Rāgiṇī*, for instance, the sudden turning of the maid's head in the wood, while she is waiting for her beloved, expresses how carefully she listens to every noise in the hope of at last hearing his steps; in the *Gurjarī Rāgiṇī* the peacock signifies the absence of the man; in the *Deśa varāṭī Rāgiṇī* the hands raised above the woman's head show her desperation, which is also conjured up by the poetic phrase which occasionally accompanies her: « She writhes like a creeper, at the memory of her love who is far away, and of past meetings »[3]; and again, in the *Toḍī Rāgiṇī* the garlands of flowers meant for the beloved, now put around the neck of the fawn following the heroine, show her disappointment at a meeting which did not take palce.

Each *rāga* is associated with an hour of the day and a season, which is the same in music, painting and poetry.

The feelings of love have been classified and codified by Indian rhetors in a vast gamut of situations and states of mind, from parting, waiting, jealousy, desperation, reconciliation, and also include the different ways desire is roused or the various techniques of conquest and seduction. Heroes and heroines, *nāyakas* and *nāyikās* are also classified according to age, experience and situation, in the case of wives, courtesans, lovers. A common representation in painting is a group of eight heroines (*aṣṭanāyikās*), each showing a specific attitude to a given situation, such as waiting, or seeking her lover. Miniatures drawing their inspiration from these subjects, which are also dealt with in poetry – *Śṛṅgāras* – are also aimed at conjuring up feelings, rather than relating facts, using a precise symbolic vocabulary here, too: the beauty of the lovers' meeting-place will show the care the beloved took in its preparation – fragrant with flowers, made comfortable with cushions, drinks and trays, and suave by the singing of nightingales or by languid music; love pangs will be more clearly apparent from bending branches or from soft moonlight; the intensity of feeling is further revealed by the position of the body and by its movements, rather than by facial expression.

The *Bārah'māsās* are a collection of 12 miniatures drawing their inspiration from the seasons, and they are also aimed at rousing a particular state of mind, inspired by nature, but always related to the lover's anxiety regarding the parting; the woman attempts to detain her beloved by praising the beauty of the season which sees them together and which is conjured up not only by the natural setting surrounding them, but also by remembering the religious festivals that are celebrated, a source of happiness and entertainment for both (figs. 51; 100).

A highly lyrical atmosphere is conjured up; nature itself, through its seasonal features, inspires into the

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characters a state of mind of intimate poetry. In his *Kavipriyā* (end of the 16th century) the poet Keshava Das thus evokes the month of Kārtik, when the festival of Divālī is celebrated [4]: « Forests and gardens, streams and lakes, the earth itself and the sky are lit with lights, as if they were lit with millions of lamps... Men and women are joyful and full of love. It is the month in which merits can be obtained by giving alms, worshipping the gods and performing sacred ablutions. Do not leave your home during the month of Kārtik ».

ROSA MARIA CIMINO

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The portraits and court scenes in this exhibition, mostly dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, represent the last flowering of Rajasthani painting. Both the smaller, individual portraits and the large, detailed pictures of durbars, processions, hunts and festivals from Udaipur and other courts provide a vivid record of the manners and customs of the Rajput nobility in their period of decline. Our pleasure in the brilliant colouring of these pictures and their vigorous dexterity of line and composition is mixed with a certain nostalgia for the vanished splendours of the way of life that they represent, even though we know from Tod and other historians that the underside of Rajput public life was often violent, cruel or sordid. Many of the customs and traditions which are documented in these paintings have only finally disappeared within living memory. Even today at the Jaipur and Udaipur palaces, for example, there can sometimes still be heard the melancholy, reedy sound of the *śah'nāī* accompanied by kettle-drums, which were formerly played by court musicians above the palace gateway to mark the passing hours of the day and the exits and entrances of princes.

That this rich pictorial record was made at all was originally a result of Mughal influence. Following their enforced submission to the emperors Akbar and Jahangir in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the Mahārājās and their sons had been required to spend much of their time in attendance at the imperial court, where they had adopted Mughal manners of dress, etiquette, cooking, architecture, gardening and decorative design. Inevitably their taste in painting had also been gradually modified by the new, naturalistic techniques developed by the Mughal studio, which were quite foreign to earlier Rajput traditions of painting.

During the first half of the 16th century, before Akbar had extended Mughal dominance over most of northern India, the leading development in painting in the region was a robust and colourful style of manuscript illustration, of which very few examples now survive. Like the evolving vernacular literatures of the same period, this style was imbued with the intense devotional feeling of the Vaisnava *bhakti* movement, centred on the cowherd god Kṛṣṇa, as seen for example in a now dispersed series of illustrations to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* [1]. It was also well suited to the expression of the ardent sentiment of secular court poetry, as seen in *rāgamālā* paintings of musical modes or a famous series of illustrations to the *Caurapañcāśikā*, the rapturous composition of a poet who has illicitly made love to the king's daughter [2]. In some ways resembling th hieratic Western Indian style of Jain manuscript illustration which had preceded it, the *Caurapañcāśikā* style used a restricted, brilliant palette, flat, formalised compositions, and bold, rounded drawing. Its regional origins remain obscure, but it is likely that it developed in the area around Mathura, where the Kṛṣṇa cult was strongest, and that it was patronised both by the wealthy merchant classes and the Rajput nobility at neighbouring centres such as Delhi, Gwalior and Chitor in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The finest manuscripts, such as the *Caurapañcāśikā* itself, were most likely made for a Rajput court, such as that of the Mahārāṇās of Mewar at Chitor. Even in the 17th century, when the historical development of the individual Rajasthani schools first becomes clear, local variants of the *Caurapañcāśikā* style still formed the basic idiom of manuscript illustration in Rajasthan, as can be seen in the page from a *Rasamañjarī* series of c. 1630 from the Mewar region (no. 101). At Udaipur, by now the capital of Mewar, in the second quarter of

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the 17th century, the court artist Sahbidin skilfully adapted the style of the previous century, incorporating a number of modified Mughal conventions in his illustrations of poetical works such as the *Rasikapriya* of Keshav Das, and of mythological epics such as the *Bhāgavata Puraṇā* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, which were made for Rana Jagat Singh I (1628-52). So successful was Sahibdin's version of the traditional style that it became a standard model for later manuscript painting at Udaipur: the early 19th century picture of a royal weighing ceremony (no. 19) is in a late and hardened version of Sahibdin's manner. Even when the Mughal art of portraiture belatedly reached Udaipur in the late 17th century, it was reinterpreted by local artists according to their own traditional vision, as in the tiger hunt of Rana Amar Singh (no. 98), with its stylised landscape and archaic narrative rendering of the slaying of the tiger.

The art of portraiture for its own sake was not only foreign to the conventions of the *Caurapañcāśikā* style and its successor styles in Rajasthan, but was virtually unknown in India before the Mughal period. The art of classical India was above all a celebration of the worlds of nature, men and the gods in their ideal aspect. The artist's purpose was to convey the vision of a transcendant reality, not to imitate the mundane forms of everyday life. Kings, when they appeared in art and literature, were seen as approximations to the received idea of a model ruler, not as individuals with particular qualities and quirks of character.

It took a remarkable alien dynasty to subvert this traditional view. The early Mughal emperors were themselves brought up in the Persian culture of their native Transoxiana, but unlike earlier Muslim rulers in India they were given to restless innovation. Babur (d. 1530), the founder of the Mughal empire, was one of the world's great diarists: his journals reveal an original intellect and a keen eye for the qualities of men and the forms of nature. His grandson Akbar (1556-1605) possessed the same spirit of inquiry. A formidably energetic ruler and patron, he recruited a large studio of native Indian artists, some of them practitioners of the *Caurapañcaśika* style, who were put to work under the supervision of two famous Persian masters brought from the Safavid court. Under Akbar's supervision the imperial Mughal style thus developed from a fusion of Persian refinement of technique, Indian vigour and feeling for nature and an increasing use of naturalistic devices, which is attributable to the influence of European works of art brought to the Mughal court by Jesuit missionaries, merchants and amabassadors. For Akbar, painting was one aspect of his grand imperial scheme, and much of the illustrated manuscript production of his reign consisted of official histories of his own career and of the lives of Babur and his Timurid ancestors. These detailed scenes, both of great public events and of daily court life, called for exceptional skills in facial and figure portraiture, which became a speciality with certain artists who were quick to learn from European models. By the end of Akbar's reign portratiture had become established as an art in its own right. His court chronicler Abu'l Fazl tells us that « His Majesty himself sat for his likeness, and also ordered the likenesses taken of all the grandees of the realm. An immense album was thus formed: those that have passed away have received a new life, and those who are still alive have immortality promised them »[3]. Most commonly, the portrait subject was depicted standing in profile, perhaps holding a flower or the hilt of a sword, and was seen as an isolated specimen against a neutral, pale green background. Depending on the artist's skill, the appearance, bearing and something of the character of Akbar's generals, nobles and courtiers were thus recorded and filed for reference in the imperial library.

This development was further refined under the aesthete, connoisseur and amateur naturalist Jahangir (1605-27). Manuscript production was much reduced, and finely detailed album paintings, mostly portraits, durbar groups and animal and flower studies, were now executed to the emperor's commission by an élite group of master artists. The reings of Jahangir and Shah Jahan (1627-58) saw the full maturity of Mughal painting. The conventions for individual portraits, dur-

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bar groups, hunting scenes and other subjects which were developed in numerous album pages and in the (now dispersed) *Jahāngir'nāma* manuscript were to change little under later emperors during the long period of imperial decline. The hardening of the Mughal style can already be seen in Shah Jahan's *Pad'shā'nāma* manuscript, with is marvellously detailed but strangely lifeless assemblages of portrait studies in massed durbar and procession scenes. Like the superb decorative arts of the period – textiles, carpets, metalwork, jewellery and hardstone carving – painting became an art of impeccably detailed surfaces and the formal arrangement of conventional motifs, magnificent but lacking a spiritual dimension. Whether despite or because of its eclectic origins and rapid growth, Mughal art, like the imperial court itself, had become insulated and deracinated, without further access to the sustaining traditions of India, Persia or Europe from which it had earlier drawn. The propagandist nature of so much Mughal painting – whether Akbar's long series of historical manuscripts or the bizarre symbolic paintings based on the troubled opium dreams of the ageing Jahangir – was a measure of the emperor's underlying insecurity. In the 18th and 19th centuries, as the empire broke up and the emperors were reduced to puppets, their tenacious preservation of the old forms of court manners and court portraiture has a bitter, pathetic quality.

The Rajput rulers, at least until the later 17th century, had little need of portraiture as an aid to dynastic prestige and personal self-esteem. They could look back on many centuries of continuous rule and on legendary ancestries beginning with the Sun or Moon gods. From infancy they imbibed their bards' tales of past glories, which celebrated the Rajput idea of the proud, indomitable, chivalrous and self-sacrificing warrior prince. As patrons of art and learning, they preserved and continued the traditions of classical Hindu civilisation. In painting, as we have seen, this took the form of illustrated manuscripts of religious epics and devotional and secular poetry. It is not until the middle of the 17th century that a small number of highly finished portraits of the Mughal type are found of Mahārājās who had close links with the imperial court, such as Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur, Jai Singh of Amber and Chattar Sal of Bundi. Some of these were no doubt painted at the Mughal court where the rulers served, but others are by Mughal-trained painters and their descendants who had found patronage at the Rajput courts, especially after the general dispersal of artists during the reign of the puritanical emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707). Thus the art of portraiture gradually became established at all the major courts of Rajasthan. So different was it in vision and technique to the local traditions of painting that in some places one or two generations passed before its conventions were properly learned and absorbed. We may also assume thet the rulers themselves only slowly acquired a taste for their own image in painting, instead of the eternal world of *nāyakas* and *nāyikās* and of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* in the groves of Vrindavan.

From the beginning of the 18th century, however, the balance between the manuscript tradition and the new art of court portraiture began to be overturned. Mythological and poetical illustrations were still produced in great numbers, but in an increasingly mechanical manner. The artists' creative inspiration was now devoted above all to the observation and depiction of the life at court around them. This occurred not only at the major courts of Amber/Jaipur, Bundi, Kotah, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Kishangarh, but even at some small *ṭhikānās*, where local chiefs maintained an artist or two to paint their likeness in durbar or on horseback.

Why did the Rajputs so readily embrace the alien art of court reportage? The main reason almost certainly lies in the prevailing political and economic insecurity during the 18th century. Now that the Mughal empire was declining, the Rajput chiefs no longer had the vigour or will to reassert their ancient control over north-western India. Instead they themselves succumbed to external invasion and internal dissension. The Marathas, expanding rapidly from the south, overran the flaccid Rajput kingdoms and exacted heavy tribute from them. The Mahārājās, as always, failed to

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form any effective defensive alliance, and in some cases they were further distracted by the rebellion of their own nobles. This long period of confusion and anarchy gave rise to an incorrigibly escapist mentality among the impotent nobility. Their former glory was now without substance, and all that remained was the pomp and show of court ceremonies and festivals. This process can be seen very clearly at Udaipur in the reign of Rāṇā Jagat Singh II (1734-51), who in 1736 first suffered the humiliation of having to entertain the Maratha invader at his court; in a painting of that year (no. 74) we see him serenely smoking his *ḥuqqā* while watching female dancers perform a *Rāsalīlā* play. As Tod says, writing in the 1820s: « addicted to pleasure, his habits of levity and profusion totally unfitted him for the task of governing his country... Many of the festivals devoted to idleness and dissipation, and now firmly rooted at Udaipur, were instituted by Jagat Singh II »[4]. Mewar had always been the traditional stronghold of Rajput values and self-esteem, and if its political power had now waned, it could still put on a first class *tamaśa*, or show. The numerous seasonal festivals in the court calendar multiplied and became more extravagant than anywhere else in Rajasthan. As Tod again observed, « the determination to be happy amidst calamity, individual and national, has made the court proverbial... in the adage, '*sāt vār ōr nō tyohār*', i.e. nine holidays out of seven days »[5]. At the same time, unusually large and detailed pictures of these spectacles were painted as an affirmation and record of their evanescent splendour; some of these are among the best of all Udaipur pictures. Thus, as with the Mughals, the later Rajputs' patronage of court genre painting is to some extent a sign of their decadence and insecurity. Even the clerks' inscriptions which are found on the backs of many later Rajasthani paintings become uneasily grandiloquent. Instead of a line or two of *nāgarī* scrawl laconically identifying the ruler portrayed, long passages of text now often give the names not only of the ruler (with many a *śrī* and a *mahārājādhirājā* and other high-sounding titles) but also of the deferential crowd of nobles, ministers, attendants, musicians, elephants and horses who surround him.

Even so, the creative vitality of the Rajput artists in adapting to this development remained undiminished. At all the major courts, their initial subservience to the Mughal style was quickly outgrown. The various compositional conventions of the standing, equestrian, durbar and other portrait genres were not only assimilated but transmuted by the hereditary artist families according to their own more robust vision. Rajput portraits differ from their Mughal models both in their bolder, more stylised technique and in their continuing expression of the Rajput ideal of kingship and nobility, rather than of the individual character of their subjects (there are of course exceptions, such as the sardonic Mewar portraits of an obese courtier, nos. 6-7). The person of the ruler generally forms the focus of the composition and dominates his companions, perhaps by being shown as physically larger than them or by wearing a radiant gold nimbus. Yet, at the same time, the participants in Rajput court scenes usually seem quite relaxed and serene, unlike the figures in many 17th century Mughal durbars, who appear to stifle under the rigidity of court protocol and the underlying suspicion of the capricious power of a remote autocrat. The Mahārājās, in contrast, were well known to their nobles and people and were, as a rule, trusted and honoured by them. Rajput durbars, processions and popular festivals were genuine expressions of a cohesive social order, and this can be felt in the characteristic spontaneity and *joie de vivre* of the local artists' renderings of these scenes. In some paintings of revels in palace gardens, for example, there is almost a reversion to the idyllic pastoral vision of early Rajput manuscript illustration.

The various local styles and sub-styles of Rajasthani painting fall broadly into four main regional groups. To the west of the Aravalli chain which divides Rajasthan lay the mainly desert region of Marwar, homeland of the Rathor Rajputs. Here painting flourished at Jodhpur, Bikaner, Kishangarh, Nagaur and other smaller centres. In the north-east of Rajastahn lay the Kachhwaha kingdom of Amber/Jaipur, and in the south-east, the neighbouring Hara kingdoms of Bundi

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and Kotah. Finally, in the south was Mewar, ruled by the Sisodia Maharanas, the premier Rajput chiefs. Each of these regions had its own distinctive style of painting, in each case centred on the capital cities, but with variant sub-styles at outlying minor courts, which in some cases have a recognisable character of their own. In the central region around Ajmer in the early 18th century several minor schools flourished, such as Junia and Sawar (nos. 64; 69; 81), showing a mixture of regional influences from Marwar, Mewar and elsewhere.

The general treatment of portraiture and court scenes in Marwar, and by the Jodphur school in particular, is very different from that of the three eastern regions. As befits an arid region, the palette is dominated by heavier, earthy colours, the compositions are often more spare and concentrated, and the bold drawing of the proud Rathor nobles in their voluminous turbans emphasises their personal dignity and swagger. The sober vein of Mughal portraiture patronised by Mahārājā Jaswant Singh (1635-78), (no. 4 is a later version of one such picture) had been fully assimilated by Jodhpur artists by the early 18th century. Tightly clustered durbar groups were perhaps the most common convention of all (nos. 3, 23, 24). These often quite small composition are direct in their simplicity: the rhytmical repetition of the proud warriors' profiles, their pure white *jāmās* and many-coloured turbans offset by a plain, strong background colour or the greenery of a palace garden, gives a potent impression of the Rajput ethos. A similar treatment was given to the standard Mughal subject of the equestrian portrait (no. 10). Processional scenes with the Rājā borne in a palanquin (nos. 2, 17) were often found in Marwar, since the elephant, the usual mount of Rajput rulers on public occasions, was unsuited to the desert terrain. Jodhpur painting did not only celebrate the masculine virtues, however, as is shown by the very delicate painting of a *zanana* lady flying a kite, against a muted, chocolate-coloured background (no. 59). In the 19th century, during the reign of Mahārājā Man Singh (1803-43), the Jodhpur school still retained much of its vigour, although, as elsewhere in Rajasthan at this period, its forms became increasingly stiff and hard. The most inventive portraits were those of Man Singh himself (nos. 27; 75), especially the scenes of his decorous sports with the ladies of his *zanānā* (no. 72). Equestrian portraits had by this time become a stereotyped subject, repeated hundreds of times in the same manner (no. 12). Another popular subject was that of the legendary lovers Dhola and Maru eloping on their camel with its proudly arching neck (no. 108). Such paintings show the Rajput court painters' constant debt to the vitality of colour and vigorous rhythms of folk art.

If Jodhpur seems the most authentically Rajput of the western, Rathor schools, that of Bikaner was the most refined in technique. Mughal and, to a lesser extent, Deccani influence had been particularly strong there in the late 17th century. During the reign of Mahārājā Anup Singh (1674-98), members of the Muslim artist families who had recently settled at Bikaner produced numbers of portraits in the Mughal manner, such as that of the historic figure of Bikaji (no. 1) who is seen dressed in a Mughal *jāmā*, against a plain background with the usual row of conventional flowers. But at the same time these artists were also turning their hands with much success to the unfamiliar task of illustrating Hindu classics such as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Rasikapriyā*. By the 1720s, a generation later, the reassertion of Rajput pictorial values can be seen in the *Bārah'māsā* illustration of the autumn month of Karttika (no. 100) by the painter Murad, in its more accentuated figure drawing and bolder use of colour, as well as the schematic rather than spatial relationship between the different elements (the standing prince and lady, the pavilion with its bed-chamber, the three couples of figures engaged in *chaupar* and other seasonal activities of the month).

Several other centres of painting in western Rajasthan, such as Jaisalmer and Nagaur, have as yet received little study. They appear to have shared many of the characteristics of the Jodhpur school. However, one of the best known of the later schools is that of Kishangarh, where, after a phase of portrait painting almost indistinguishable from contemporary Mughal work, a

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lyrical style of mythological painting and portraiture developed in the reign of the *bhakti* poet Rājā Savant Singh (1748-64). Its subject matter was the sports of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā and similar scenes, set in palaces and groves of Kishangarh itself (nos. 35, 44). The conventions of later Mughal painting were skilfully reinterpreted, with expressive distortions of form, as in the characteristic elongated eye and features of the human figures and the rounded, tapering neck, pretty face and tasselled mane of the horses (no. 61). But this highly mannered style soon declined into sentimental exaggeration after Savant Singh's reign.

Painting in the north-eastern region of Dhundhar was naturally dominated by the Kachhwaha court of Amber (from the 1720s, Jaipur), which had only come to prominence as a Rajput power following its early alliance with the Mughals, an inevitable development in view of its proximity to the courts of Agra and Delhi. Mughal cultural influence had been correspondingly stronger at Amber than at other Rajput courts during the 17th century. In the later part of the century, a strongly Mughal style of portraiture was practised there, together with a more traditional Rajput style of manuscript illustration. The production of numerous series of *Rāgamālā* (no. 62), *Bārah'māsā* and other texts in this flatter, more formalised style continued down to the late 19th century. Variant styles were also practised at smaller, outlying courts such as Malpura, where a well known *Rāgamālā* series was painted in 1756 (nos. 102-3).

Under the enlightened astronomer Rājā Sawāī Jai Singh (1693-1743), a distinctive Jaipur style of portraiture evolved, which tended to keep to the conventional figure groupings and muted palette of the Mughal style. However, by the reign of Rājā Isvari Singh (1743-51), larger and more inventive paintings of animal fights and other palace scenes are found by the artist Lal, perhaps composed under the influence of Udaipur painting. The art of individual portraiture continued to flourish under Mahārājā Madho Singh (1751-68), who set his artists to compile numerous albums of stiffly posed portraits of himself (no. 8 is a Mewar copy of one such picture) as well as more informal studies of his courtiers, attendants, musicians and other officials. In the troubles of the late 18th and early 19th centuries the Jaipur court became notorius for its moral decadence and intrigue. Unable to control political events, the Rājās took refuge in a form of religious eroticism. With its confident, attenuated line and hard, meticulous finish, the Jaipur artist's interpretation of the stock late Mughal subject of a languid lady at her toilet (no. 53) is typical of this period. Contemporary portraits are in a similarly stiff yet florid style (no. 11).

The origins of 17th century painting in Haravati, the neighbouring south-eastern kingdoms of Bundi and Kotah ruled by the Hara Rajputs, are again found in the workings of Mughal influences, both of the Akbari and Jahangiri schools, on a local pictorial tradition rooted in the *Caurapañcāśikā* style. Almost all Bundi *Rāgamālā* paintings, in particular, derive from the compositional models of a *Rāgamālā* series painted by Mughal-trained artists in 1591 at Chunar in eastern India, where a Bundi ruler had for a time served as governor. In the reign of Rāo Chattar Sal (1631-59) Mughal portrait conventions had also become established at Bundi, and by the time of Rāo Bhao Singh (1658-81) they had already been stylistically assimilated. The cool, green backgrounds of Mughal convention turned to warmer, brighter hues and the drawing became more rounded and expressive (nos. 15 and 26 are rather later examples). During the 18th century such portraits and court scenes were further elaborated, often with much zest, as in the paintings of the Tīj festival celebrations (no. 34) and of a ruler with his ladies in a palace garden (no. 49), which is probably from Bundi or the minor court of Uniara. Amid the disturbances of the later 18th century, mildly sensuous studies of *zanānā* ladies set against cool, white terrace backgrounds (no. 58) gave some solace to the Bundi rulers.

At Kotah, which had been created by Mughal command out of Bundi territory in 1625, court portraiture developed in a broadly similar manner to that of Bundi. The two capitals were only a short distance apart,

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and it is likely that artists often travelled between the two at different periods, as well as to other regional centres such as Uniara (no. 31). However, around the beginning of the 18th century one of the most remarkable of all Rajasthani masters worked at Kotah, specialising above all in elephant and other animal subjects. The lightly coloured brush drawing of an elephant fight (no. 90), with its highly vigorous line and dynamic distortions of form, can be attributed to this artist. Even the stereotyped works of his later, less gifted imitators preserve something of his ferocious power (nos. 87; 89). Hunting scenes became the most effective genre of painting at Kotah in the 18th century, conveying supremely well the primaeval excitement and ritual importance of the royal tiger or lion hunt, amid the dense thickets and rocky outcrops of the Kotah jungle (nos. 91, 92). In the 19th century a final flowering of Kotah painting occurred in the reign of Rāo Ram Singh (1827-65). Court scenes up to the 1850s are sometimes on a grand scale and retain at least something of the earlier vitality of line as well as a rather brighter colour sense, which, as can be seen in the procession scene (no. 22), was eventually seduced by the glaring synthetic greens and blues newly imported from Europe.

As we have seen, the southern kingdom of the Sisodia Mahārāṇās of Mewar had for long been a major centre of painting and other arts, first at the fortress city of Chitor and, from the early 17th century, at the new capital of Udaipur, where the artist Sahibdin and his followers developed a distinctive and durable style based on the earlier *Curapañcāśikā* tradition. The most conservative and traditionalist of all the Rajput rulers, the Mahārāṇās had resisted Mughal domination for nearly half a century longer than their fellows, and after their final capitulation in 1615 had kept their distance as much as possible from the imperial court. The first few examples of portraiture and court scenes are found at Udaipur only in the 1670s, where they appear in an already assimilated form, through the mediation of the Bundi school. But from the reign of Amar Singh II (1698-1710), portraiture and court genre painting began to flourish at Udaipur as at no other court. If this development was, in part at least, a form of escapism in an age of chaos, it has nevertheless given us some of the most impressive of all the Rajasthani paintings, as well as a uniquely comprehensive record of the public life and ceremonial of a Rajput court; it is appropriate that about a third of the pictures in the present exhibition should be from Udaipur and its *ṭhikānās*.

Amar Singh's artists painted a number of portraits and court scenes in a distinctive grisaille style which has indebted to Mughal and Deccani example (nos. 11, 66). But a more important development was the new fashion for unusually large and detailed court scenes in a more traditional manner, such as the densely populated tiger hunt (no. 98). A further expansion of scale occurred under Mahārāṇā Sangram Singh (1710-34). The normal picture size become larger than the standard album or manuscript page, in order to accomodate the artists' ambitious views of crowded durbar, procession and hunt scenes, set against the palace buildings and hilly landscapes of Udaipur. If there was some loss of technical refinement in these huge compositions, it was more than made up for by the artists' vitality of imaginative detail, as in the camp scene at the Udai Sagar (no. 82) and the festival scenes set in the palace gardens (nos. 41, 70). Sangram Singh seems to have commissioned a thorough documentary record of his daily life. Intimate pursuits such as a game of dice with his nobles (no. 77), as well as public occasions such as a procession escorting elephants through the town (no. 85) were duly immortalated by his artists.

Under the hedonistic Mahārāṇā Jagat Singh (1734-51), the « determination to be happy amidst calamity » became fully established at Udaipur. We see him, untroubled by the Maratha depredations, boating on the Pichola lake (no. 71) or attending a tumultuous elephant fight (no. 88). Portrait scenes of his reign show a skilful evocation of romantic atmosphere (no. 46) or, occasionally, of malicious satire (nos. 6, 7). Large court scenes continued to be produced in the early years of the reign of Mahārāṇā Ari Singh (1761-73; nos. 40, 73), but during the half-century

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which followed the economy of Mewar was immobilised by repeated invasions and civil war. Peace and prosperity were only restored after the acceptance of British suzerainty in 1818. In the intervening period, some Udaipur artists left to work elsewhere. One gifted artist, Bakhta, went to the *ṭhikānā* of Deogarh (nos. 24, 40), where a distinctive variant of the Udaipur style was to endure for at least three generations. His son Chokha was also a vigorous and idiosyncratic painter, working both at Deogarh and Udaipur, where he painted a number of warmly sensuous portraits of the libidinous Maharana Bhim Singh (no. 48) among other subjects (no. 14).

Under Bham Singh and his successors Jawan Singh (1828-38) and Sarup Singh (1842-61), the fashion for large scale compositions was successfully revived. As at other Rajput courts, the use of colour and line had hardened and become stereotyped, but even so the artists retained much compositional acumen, as in the durbar and temple scenes painted for Jawan Singh (nos. 28, 32), which can be attributed to Ghasi, an artist who had earlier been employed by Colonel Tod to make architectural sketches. Tod describes him only as « ... a native artist, who labours at Udaipur for the same daily pay as a tailor, carpenter or other artisan... » [6], which at least reveals the humble social status of the Rajput court painter. A more accomplished artist of this time was Tara, the leading painter of Mahārāṇā Sarup Singh, to whom can be attributed the Ganggaur festival scene (no. 37), the picnic scene at Govardhan Vilas (no. 68) and the painting of the Mahārāṇā showing his prowess with a spear (no. 83).

Such was the strength of tradition that large and often impressive paintings of durbars and of *śikāra* scenes especially continued to be produced in the reign of Mahārāṇā Fateh Singh (1884-1930) and even later, albeit under some European influence. But this type of work was now just one among many archaic vestiges of the old way of life. The rulers of Udaipur as of the other Rajasthani courts had long grown accustomed to large oil portraits in the British academic manner and, even more, to the novel art of photography.

ANDREW TOPSFIELD

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1. *Life in the Rajput Palaces*

As a member of a warrior caste, it was a Rajput's divine duty, or *dharma*, to fight. In the *Bhāgavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa persuades the reluctant Arjuna that, as a warrior, the only honourable occupation for him is warfare. The Rajputs took the lesson to heart:

« Think thou also of thy duty and do not waver. There is no greater good for a warrior than to fight in a righteous war » (2.31) [1].

Bravery was encouraged and fear of death reduced by belief in immediate reincarnation:

« As a man leaves an old garment and puts on one that is new, the Spirit leaves his mortal body and then puts on one that is new » (2.22).

« If any man thinks he slays, and if another thinks he is slain, neither knows the way of truth. The Eternal in man cannot kill: the Eternal in man cannot die » (2.19).

For those soldiers of a less philosophical turn of mind there was a more practical method of reducing the fear of death:

« They all eat opium, and on the day of battle they swallow a double dose. They also give some to their horses to enable them to endure fatigue » [2].

The opium was meant to render the warrior insensible to danger, and so induce the kind of reckless, sometimes indeed insane, bravery for which the Rajputs became famous. In moments of greatest adversity, such as when besieged and with no chance of avoiding defeat, they employed their most dire methods, as Babur found when he made the final assault on Chanderi on 29th January 1528:

« They had taken the resolve of those who give up a place as lost; they put their ladies and beauties to death, then, looking themselves to die, came naked out to fight... » [3].

The women were put to death by burning, a rite known as *jōhar*: a sort of mass *satī* of the widows-elect, before their men sallied out to die fighting.

If Rajput culture is to be understood, this commitment to warfare must always be remembered: Rajput art is a product of a feudal society with a military aristocracy. The Rajputs have been, at all periods of their history, notable patrons of the arts. Amongst the finest examples of Rajput art are the palaces, built for the security, residence and leisure of the rajas and their women and their courts. These palaces together show the development of a distinct architectural style of great sophistication and imaginative invention. They are concentrated, as are the Rajput people, in the western and central parts of northern India, in an area now covered by the new state of Rajasthan and parts of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The best of the Rajput palaces – judges in terms of architectural invention – are to be found in Chittor, Gwalior, Orchha, Datia, Amber, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Bundi, Dungarpur, Kotah, Rewa, Jaipur and Jaisalmer. The palaces at Bharatpur and Deeg, though built under Jat rather than Rajput patronage, must be added to this list because stylistically they clearly belong to the same architectural tradition. The palaces or groups of palaces in these sixteen towns were built during a period of three hundred years, from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-

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eighteenth centuries; that is to say, the period of Moghul supremacy in India and almost a century before.

The palaces are not all of the same type. Each of the cities listed contains one palace which is the largest and principal. This served as the main residence of the *rājā* and at least some of his wives and courtiers. It is usually divided strictly into two parts: the women's quarters and the men's quarters. The women's quarters – the *rawala* or *zanānā* – has a separate entrance and was closed to all but its inhabitants and a select group of men. Often the *zanānā* consists of a single courtyard, the ranges of which are divided into separate apartments, so that each queen had a private suite of rooms and could choose whether to communicate with her neighbours. The conditions of purdah dictated the presence of *jālīs*, or screens across the windows; these are often finely carved stone lattices through which the inmates of the *zanānā* could glimpse the outside world or events taking place in the courtyards of the palace, without being seen themselves. The men's quarters – the *mardānā* – is divided into rooms intended for the conducting of state affairs and the private apartments of the raja. The former include the *dīvān-e ām* (hall of public audience) and *dīvān-e khās* (hall of private audience); the latter include a *citra śālā* (picture gallery) and a bedroom (often decorated with inlaid mirrorwork and so called a *śīś' mahal*). The *mardānā* usually also contains a *silah'khānā* (armoury), a *dōlat Khānā* (treasury) and copious store-rooms, and often it also includes barracks and stables. The *mardānā* is usually the more splendid part of the palace.

The courtly life of the palaces is often depicted in miniature paintings. These paintings rarely depict specific buildings – usually they have some generalised architectural background – but even so they give us a very clear idea of how the palaces were furnished and used. For example, we can see from them that there was a very extensive use of soft furnishings. Rich carpets were piled on the floor with no concern about clashing colours or obscuring designs; other carpets were thrown over window sills; people sat either on cuschions and bolsters on the floor or on low broad beds; brightly coloured draperies were hung in doorways and windows and often rolled up and held with cords; more drapery was swagged under eaves; and embroidered canopies supported on poles served to extend the living space into the open courtyards.

The courtyards were used for various activities: for *dar'bārs*, or royal audiences, which were occasions involving splendid pageantry; for entertainments such as a *nautch* – a performance by dancers; and for the celebration of some religious festivals – the playing of *Holī* by royalty is a favourite theme of miniature paintings. The highest courtyards and terraces were used as places to sleep during the hot weather.

The miniatures also show us that the many small wall-niches were used for the display and storage of phials and bottles. This habit of displaying vessels in niches suggested a type of wall decoration, which consists of the depiction of such arrangements in plaster relief. Another type of wall decoration was provided by the miniature paintings themselves: though usually kept in albums, they are sometimes found set into the wall and protected by glass.

Throughout the palace the rooms are small, suggesting small assemblies of people; larger gatherings, as already stated, were held in open courtyards. The many floors are often connected by ramps rather than staircases, so that the royalty could more easily be carried in litters. The various apartments are often connected by narrow corridors, in order to reduce an insurgent enemy force to single file and to restrict its use of weapons.

As this last design feature suggests, the principal palace also served as a retreat against attack; it is defended by fortified walls and gates. Some of them are consequently known as « the *garh* palace » (i.e. fort-palace) and this appellation will serve well for them all. Almost invariably there are defences contiguous with the palace, so that fort and palace form a single structure; often, in addition, this fortified palace is contained within a further fortress. The four greatest Rajput fortresses, each built on a high hill which rises abruptly from a surrounding plain, are those of Chittor,

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Gwalior, Jodphur and Jaisalmer. The *garh* palaces of Orchha, Bikaner, Kotah, Rewa and Bharatpur are also contained within forts. The remainder of the *garh* palaces on the list given have, like the others, fortifications as integral parts of their structure, but they are not contained within further forts; however, in most of these cases there is a separate fort, next to or above the *garh* palace, which serves as a final retreat – this is the case in Amber, Bundi, Dungarpur, Jaipur and Deeg.

Mark Girouard suggests that the English country houses had a symbolic function which rivalled their function as accommodation [4]. They served as expressions or evidence of political power, and became symbols of political rivalry. Houghton, for exemple, built by Robert Walpole from 1721

« became a source of bitter envy to his brother-in-law and neighbour, Lord Townshend, who had been a much greater man than Walpole, and hat put him on the way to success » [5].

This is probably also true of the Italian palazzi, and it is certainly true of the Rajput *garh* palaces. A Rajput palace was a symbol of a dynasty, and each *rājā* sought to outdo his neighbours and his predecessors in the splendour of his building projects. The Emperor Jahangir was reportedly enraged to hear of the magnificence of the *dīvān-e ām* built by his vassal Mīrzā Rājā Jai Singh at Amber, and Jai Singh was obliged to obscure the building's beauties in order to forestall a punitive raid [6].

Girouard also points out that only a limited amount of time was spent in a typical English country house by its owner (a circumstance which enhanced its function as symbol as opposed to accomodation). He gives the example of William Cavendish, third Earl of Devonshire, who spent

« on an average, a little under four months of the year in Derbyshire, where his main properties were... » [7]

the remainder of the year being spent on other properties or at court in London. Again, this is as true of the Rajput palaces. A Rajput contemporary of Cavendish, such as Mahārājā Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur, spent most of the year fighting campaigns for the Moghul in some distant part of the Empire, much of his time at the Moghul court in Delhi or Agra; And of the time that he was able to spend in his own state much was spent in minor palaces or retreats. However, whereas William Cavendish took his family about with him, Jaswant Singh left his behind. The majority of the permanent residents of a Rajput palace were women and as a result, in some of the palaces – and particularly at Jodhpur – the *zanānā* portion is more extensive than the *mardānā*.

The other sorts of palace, apart from the *garh* palace, which might be found in a Rajput city include a further and separate *zanānā*, for the accomodation of a favourite wife or of concubines; a house for the heir apparent; and pleasure palaces for shooting expeditions or picnics. The pleasure palaces are often set by or on water, or in gardens. Some of them, for example Jag Niwas (now the Lake Palace Hotel) in Udaipur, were used as summer retreats from the hot weather but only in times of peace – they are usually not fortified. Often, in fact, they do not even consist of enclosed buildings but rather of a sequence of open pavilions, linked by gardens and ornamental pools. The picnics and shooting expeditions could be lavish affairs lasting several days, and the leasure palaces, though small, offered no compromise concerning comfort and elegance.

The Rajput school is also represented by *havelis* – towns courtyard-houses of nobles – and by *devals* or memorial *chat'rīs* – small pavilions which mark the sites of royal funeral pyres. Dams and *ghāts* (flights of broad steps leading into water) were built under royal patronage in efforts to protect the common populace from drought and to give them places at which to wash. The dams and *ghāts* are often adorned with pavilions – those at Rajsamand, north of Udaipur, are particularly fine.

The architects and craftsmen responsible for all these buildings were, for the most part, anonymous. At least from the Maurya period (320-185 B.C.) the *śilpins* were

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organized in guilds and, as members of an artisan caste, inherited their skills [8]. Babur confirms that this arrangement persisted in the late medieval period:

« Another good thing in Hindustan is that it has unnumbered and endless workmen of every kind. There is a fixed caste for every sort of work and for every thing, which has done that work or that thing from father to son till now » [9].

It has been said of Indian art generally that

« There were no such persons as individual, self-sufficient artists in the Western sense » [10].

In this context this common view requires some qualification. Not all of the architects were anonymous; we know the names of some from inscriptions. For example, the *Rājāprasasti*, inscribed on the *ghāṭ* at Rajsmand near Udaipur, lists the names of the chief *gajadharas* (literally, « holder of the yardstick », who were responsible for the construction of the *ghāṭ*, and some of these names appear also in inscriptions in the Udaipur *garh* palace [11]. And so although, certainly, a Rajput palace was not, like a contemporary European palace, the invention of an individual designer, but rather of a cooperative group of craftsmen, still there were clearly some members of that group who were at least *primus inter pares*. Furthermore there are regional differences in the style which suggest that the chief architects in each city, either singly or between them, developed discernibly individual interpretations of the style.

2. *The Rajput School*

The earliest phase of Rajput history will not concern us here since no palaces of that period have survived. There is ample evidence, both archaeological and literary, to show that the ancient Hindus did build grand palaces. The fact that these buildings have not survived, Coomaraswamy accounts for by suggesting that they were made of wood [12]; however, he produces no good evidence for this and a more credible explanation is suggested by the Indians' attitude to secular architecture. Though always conscious of their heritage and attaching great importance to building projects, the Hindus have never been conscientious preservers of secular architecture. Each successive ruler of any dynasty felt the need, given the required leisure and resources, to express his personal prestige by building his own palace and made no effort to maintain those of his predecessors, which were abandoned or even destroyed to provide materials or space for the new project. Sometimes whole capitals were moved for reasons of strategy, necessity or prestige, and the old site was left to decay; examples of such moves include the Rathors' move from Mandore to Jodhpur, the Sisodias' move from Chittor to Udaipur and the Kachwahas' move from Amber to Jaipur. This is perhaps not an exclusively Indian attitude, but in this context it is clearly related to a trait of mind which is caracteristically Indian, namely the Indians' much-mentioned lack of a sense of history. It contrasts strongly with the attitude to temples: the abodes of the gods were to be preserved at all costs and moved only in extreme circumstances, but the abodes of men could be treated with less respect. In the light of this, it is no matter for wonder that there are no Hindu palaces more than five hundred years old still standing.

The oldest surviving Rajput palaces date from the mid-fifteenth century; these are the palace of Rana Khumba of Chittor (1433-68) which is mostly a rebuilding of a yet earlier palace, and the palace of Raja Kirtti Singh of Gwalior (1454-79). The palace of Rana Khumba is one of several hundred monuments in the citadel of Chittor, but the few important palaces date from the period between Khumba's reign and Akbar's sack of Chittor in 1567. At Gwalior there is a group of four palaces built between 1454 and 1518, the largest of which is the Man Mandir built about 1500 by Raja Man Singh Tomar.

In these early palaces of Chittor and Gwalior many of the diagnostic features of the Rajput style are already found. These features include square-based columns

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with corbel capitals in imitation of temple columns; elaborately carved brackets and corbels on gateways and galleries; high level courtyards; the *jarokhā* or cradle balcony; the *chajjā* or deep eave; the *jālī* or pierced stone screen; coloured tile decoration; the lotus rosette; and, in the Man Mandir, the first hesitant use of the cusped arch. All of these features, with the exception of the coloured tile decoration, are of Hindu origin; and all of these palaces, with the exception of the latest at Chittor, were built before the Moghul invasion of India, in 1526.

Next comes a group of four palaces built at Orchha and Datia between 1530 and 1620. The oldest surviving portion of the palace at Amber was built about 1600; the remaining parts were built in the course of the seventeenth century.

The palaces of Udaipur, Bikaner, Bundi, Dungarpur, Jodhpur, Kotah and Rewa and the early palaces at Jaisalmer represent the maturity of the Rajput style. Many of these palaces cannot be assigned to a particular date because they were built slowly and continuously throughout a long period: continual alteration and addition is an important feature of Rajput palace architecture. But though some are of earlier foundation and most have later parts, all of these palaces were built predominantly in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Thus the palace at Udaipur was begun about 1570, after the enforced move from Chittor, and though many of the earliest parts survive, the palace is nevertheless mostly seventeenth century; the fort and palace of Jodhpur were begun more than a century earlier, in 1459, but much of the surviving palace complex dates from the early eighteenth century.

All of the forms and motifs characteristic of the early phase of the Rajput school were perpetuated in the mature phase but some were used less commonly, as they began to be replaced by the new forms. In the later buildings the cusped arch is found much more extensively, and balustered and fluted columns supporting such arches are found more often than the imitation temple columns supporting lintels. Another new feature is the *bangaldār* roof or curved eave (derived from the Bengali bamboo hut and first adopted in lithic form in the Muslim architecture of that region). These developments in the style are the results of the first influence of Moghul achitecture. The mature phase also saw changes in the applied decoration: wall painting and mosaic techniques were now used more commonly than coloured tiles and the decoration was greatly proliferated. As before, it was highly colourful, painstakingly elaborate, and often figural and of religious significance. Sometimes this applied decoration also shows a Moghul influence, but just as often its source is in Rajput folk art and it would be well described by Coomaraswamy's phrase (intended as a description of Rajput miniature painting); « an aristocratic folk art » [13].

The Rajput school entered a third phase, and in some senses the phase of its decline, with the foundation of Jaipur in 1728. The palace and city were built between that date and the middle of the eighteenth century. The palaces at Bharatpur and Deeg also belong to this period. The period is marked by a greatly increasing Moghul influence, particularly on the decorative forms, and a correspondingly more complete abandonment of the archaic Hindu motifs which had been employed in the earliest Rajput buildings (for example, the temple columns and the richly carved brackets). But also, in parts of the *garh* palace at Jaipur and in Rājā Suraj Mall's pleasure palace at Deeg, a Moghul influence is apparent, for the first time, in the planning, and on these occasions the style must be said to have lost its independence. The remaining palaces of this period – Rājā Badan Singh's palaces at Bharatpur and Deeg – follow traditional Rajput planning principles.

In the later eighteenth century building continued at most of the Rajput capitals and at newly established cities such as Alwar; but the style had ceased to develop, it merely survived. In the *havelis* and late palaces at Jaisalmer (c. 1800) the forms and motifs on the style are reduced in scale and proliferated into mere decoration. In the late nineteenth century the style was revived by a few enthusiastic Britons, including Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob, but by then the Rajput *rājās* had taken to

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coating the apartments of their palaces with a veneer of Victorian decoration. Then, when the *rājās* found that the palaces could not successfully be adapted for entertaining European guests – and in any case the guaranteed peace had obviated the necessity for fortified palaces – they left them and built new palaces. These are large country houses in European or « Indo-Saracenic » styles. So although the Rajputs flourished into the twentieth century, their traditional architecture did not.

From this sketch history of the Rajput school it is clear that the major contemporary influence was provided by Moghul architecture; a fact which is hardly surprising and so one which is too often exaggerated [14]. It has even been suggested that Rajput architecture can be considered as provincial imitation of Moghul architecture [15]. Now this view is quite wrong: the relationship between Indo-Islamic and Hindu schools is always more complicated than such views suggest.

To begin with, Indo-Islamic architecture was at all periods profoundly influenced by Hindu architecture. When they began to build in India, the Muslims could hardly have avoided the influence of the flourishing and powerful Hindu tradition, but they made no effort to avoid it. In the initial phase of Indo-Islamic building the Muslims used fragments of destroyed Hindu buildings with which to build the first mosques; and at all periods they employed Hindu craftsmen and allowed them to introduce the Hindu decorative motifs which the craftsmen were best practised at; they used the local materials and adopted Hindu forms which had been developed to counter the effects of the Indian climate. Undoubtedly the Muslims introduced into Indian architecture a foreign technology and the forms associated with a foreign religion, but the mutual influences were such that both Hindu and Indo-Islamic architecture must be considered in an Indian context, they must be ragarded as the two contrapuntal strains of Indian architecture and not as respectively indigenous and foreign.

This metaphor of counterpoint, suggesting simultaneous relatedness and separateness, is nowhere apt than in defining the relationship between Moghul and Rajput architecture: Rajput architecture is not an imitation of Moghul; the two schools were mutually influential but are stylistically distinguishable.

Of the architectural features common to both schools, the one which is most often misunderstood in this context is probably the cusped arch. The cusped or foliated arch becomes one of the hallmarks of Moghul architecture and its appearance in Rajput palace architecture seems to endorse the view that the latter is an imitation of the former. In fact, however, the cusped arch plays a longer and more complicated role in the history of Indian architecture than that view supposes. The form of the cusped arch, and variants of it, occur on Hindu and Buddhist monuments built long before the first major Indo-Islamic monuments, and it appears in Rajput palaces which predate the Moghul invasion – for example, the Man Mandir of Rājā Man Singh Tomar at Gwalior (c. 1500). It is true that the form was brought to a splendid maturity in those parts of the Moghul palaces at Agra and Delhi built during the reign of Shah Jahan, and that from then on it was used extensively and confidently in both Moghul and Rajput buildings. But the development of the cusped arch in this period of Indian architecture was a joint venture. It was an old motif, or distinguished, Indian lineage, which was first re-introduced in a Rajput building, subsequently experimented with in both Rajput and Moghul buildings, brought to maturity in Moghul ones, and finally over-used in both.

This is one example which shows how wrong it would be to regard Moghul architecture as a foreign import and Rajput architecture as the result of Hindus aping foreigners. Both the Mogul school and the Rajput school must be seen within the context of the whole history of Indian architecture. The two styles developed adjacently and simultaneously, and they borrowed freely from the same sources: from Hindu and Buddhist temple architecture, from the buildings of the early Indo-Muslim dynasties and from each other. Consequently there are many motifs and technical

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methods common to both and indeed the buildings are often the work of the same craftsmen. But though derived mainly from the same sources and though mutually influential, the two styles remained quite distinguishable.

The most striking points of distinction concern the massing, planning, and siting of the major palaces. The typical Moghul palace consists of a number of separate buildings formally disposed about a piece of level ground which is surrounded by a defensive fort wall. The typical Rajput *garh* palace is a single continuous mass of fortification and palace combined, built either on the top or on the slope of a hill. The clearest examples of this are the palaces of Amber, Datia, Udaipur, Bundi and Dungarpur. Often, it is true, a Rajput palace is contained within a fortress (as already described) but on such occasions the palace always either grows out of and forms a part of the fort wall or, if detached, is itself further defended. So in the Rajput examples, fortification and palace are much more integrated, the palace consists of a single complex rather than a group of buildings, and it is usually built on high ground.

It has already been pointed out that the *garh* palace at Jaipur is the exception to this, being influenced by Moghul planning [16]. It is built on a plain, it consists not of a single mass but of a series of courtyards, and its fortifications are separate from it. However, the Moghul influence is not total: in its original conception the palace did consist of a single block – the seven-storeyed Chandra Mahal – and the other courtyards are subsequent additions.

These general rules refer only to the *garh* palaces and not to the other Rajput buildings. The pleasure palaces and other houses are very diverse in kind but for the most part they too differ from the Moghul palaces in their plan. Only Suraj Mall's pleasure palace at Deeg follows the Moghul type of plan thoroughly: it is the one palace complex, of those which we are considering, whose builders could be accused of having aped Moghul buildings.

The Moghul type, which one may guess is derived from the Arab camp [17], is well illustrated by the Purana Qila (Old Fort) and the Lal Qila (Red Fort), both in Delhi, and by the palace complex at Fatehpur Sikri. The major pavilions of the palace in the Lal Qila do touch the fort wall, but they are detached from each other. Some of the palace buildings at Agra are exceptional, being more integrated with each other as well as contiguous with the fort wall, and their greater integration may be the result of Rajput influence; the Rajput influence evident in the forms and motifs employed on the palace buildings at Fatehpur Sikri and Agra has often been remarked on [18], but this apparent Rajput influence on the planning of the palace at Agra has not been noted.

Turning more exclusively to the planning and massing of the Rajput palaces, we find that they fall into two groups. The majority of the palaces exhibit an assymetry of both plan and elevation; they are irregular in all dimensions. Others are much more symmetrical in their plan and elevations, and formal in their massing. We may assume that the irregularity of those of the first group is at least in part due to the piecemeal and spasmodic growth of the palaces over long periods, particularly since the more regular palaces are those which were built over relatively short periods. But it is clear that this irregularity is also due to a deliberate attempt at a picturesque informality, since often the individual parts of the complex are no more regular in themselves than the whole assembly. We may not assume, as Percy Brown does [19], that the symmetry exhibited by the palaces in the second and smaller group is the resutl of a Muslim influence: the principles of symmetry had been employed in Hindu religious architecture since its inception and the Hindus did not require the Muslims to teach them how to draw squares. It is true that the earlier Rajput buildings have much in common with Muslim sultanate buildings at Mandu, Chanderi and Delhi, but the planning and massing are always points of distinction: Rajput plans are complex even when regular, and the Rajputs never adopted the elemental forms – the half-sphere domes on cubic chambers – of sultanate architecture. Rajput use of

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symmetry is rather the result of the architects having uncharacteristically obeyed some of the prescriptions of the ancient Hindu treatises on architecture.

There are, then, in Rajput architecture, two contradictory tendencies; one towards symmetry and regularity, the other towards informal composition. These different tendencies are not characteristic of different historical phases; both are found throughout the whole history of the Rajput school. The tendency to informality is much more common of the two. The informal planning and massing creates a special quality in the majority of the Rajput palaces. This quality does not concern the use of the buildings, it is a sculptural and stylistic quality and concerns the effect of a building on us, as observers, as we travel through it. The effect is to elude our immediate comprehension, to confuse or disorient us by means of complexity and ambiguity. The extensive and irregular plan of one of these palaces is so complicated that it cannot all be considered at once. Led from one portion of the palace to another by means of narrow, winding, enclosed corridors, we cannot easily establish how the various parts cohere. Even individual rooms contribute to this effect: they are rarely simply rectangular but tend to be of more complicated and unexpected shapes and we cannot see the whole of a particular room at once. Forests of columns reinforce this effect by obscuring our view of parts of rooms. And so the forms of the individual rooms and the way in which they relate to each other are not clear or logical or easily readable.

The typical facade is no easier because of its unpredictable rhythm of advance and recess, further complicated by projecting baloonies. Also it cannot be defined as existing in a single, particular plane which we can point to, and in this sense it is ambiguous, indeterminate, unfixed. The high level courtyards inside the palace disorient us in another dimension. We find courtyards at different levels and so search for a ground level, or for any fixed level, against which to measure the many others. This effect is particularly successful at Udaipur City palace, in which we enter a high level courtyard to find it planted with mature trees, as if it were at ground level (an effect made possible by building against a hill). So although the palace is a single, continuous mass, its form is so complicated in all three dimensions that it cannot readily be comprehended as a unity.

A symmetrical and regular building we perceive quite differently. When we consider, for exemple, the Taj Mahal, once we have established that the building is symmetrical we can look at one elevation and understand them all. We perceive it, so to say, synchronically; from the parts which we can see at any one time, we make deductions about the parts not then seen. This synchronic type of perception is best illustrated by the story of the tourist at the Villa Rotunda who asked his companion « Is it really symmetrical, or do we have to go round all of it? ». The majority of the Rajput palaces cannot be so perceived; we have to explore them part by part, and each part, once we have passed it, may be forgotten, because the parts have no evidently logical relation with each other.

Richard Lannoy says of the sixth century Ajanta frescoes that

> « even the best preserved are exceedingly elusive to ' read '; one must make an appreciable effort to slow down one's reading of their visual language in order to perceive the spatial and tactile relations established between the figures... one is constantly discovering new figures which were unseen... and the tempo of this slow discovery is very precisely calculated » [20].

This is a similar effect to the one being described. In a Rajput palace forms are complex or ambiguous, they are not immediately readable, and sometimes (as with the indeterminate plane of the facade) we cannot define them. The palaces elude our full comprehension and mock our enquiries. This important quality may be called the quality of elusion.

Apart from the planning and massing, there are other features of the typical palace which assist this elusion. In an effort to keep the apartments cool, the palaces are so designed that the interiors are perpetually shrouded in half-darkness; this obscures spaces and

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blurs the edges of forms, making them less clear and discernible. The rich surface decoration inside the palaces, whether figural or abstract in content, because of its extent and even tone, is difficult to read just as the Ajanta frescoes are. The cusping of an arch disintegrates a potentially severe form into a less distinct one. The contour of a cusped arch is not a firm line, as is that of a Roman or Gothic arch, it is an ambiguous one: it is an agitated line, suggesting a smoother curve which it ripples across but never follows. It breaks up the intense light which falls on it and creates a more varied pattern of shadow. Again, this effect is achieved with particular success in the Bari Mahal of the Udaipur City palace, where the arcades of cusped arches and the foliage of the trees have the same effect of fragmenting the sunlight.

The half-darkness, the rich surface decoration and the cusped arches all further the quality of elusion but would not of themselves create it. This is apparent from the total absence of the quality from Moghul architecture despite the presence there of these features. The absence of the quality from Moghul architecture is a result of the quite different treatment of plan and massing, as already described, and provides another point of distinction between the two schools. The quality of elusion is, in fact, typically Hindu; it might be compared with ambiguity of form found in temple architecture: a typical medieval temple is entirely covered with sculpture which obscures its form and creates another form.

In attempting to define the character of the Rajput palaces, many writers speak of their « mystery » or « romance ». For exemple, Percy Brown asserts that

> « there is something more than architecture in these palaces of the Rajput princes, these fanciful Pavilions... emblematic of the old world traditions of their race... every stone is touched with the spirit of romance » [21].

What such writers are describing is the quality of elusion, but none of them has suspected that it is a deliberate architectural effect, achieved by devices which are susceptible to analysis. And they are experiencing it as much as describing it: their use of words like « mystery » and their inability to define wherein lies this « something more than architecture », suggest that they are baffled by some quality of the palaces, suggest that they feel eluded in some way. Their very confusion marks the success of the palaces' builders.

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NOTES

HISTORY, EPOS, LEGEND

[1] T.H. Hendley (1897), pp. 2-3; *Vir Vinod* (1886), I, pp. 168-184 (quotations from this text were provided by Dr. Carlo Maraja); the dates regarding the kings refer to the period of their reign but historians often disagree about these.
[2] T.H. Hendley, p. 4, 7.
[3] J. Tod (1914), I, pp. 177-181; G.C. Chandra Choudhary (1954), pp. 172-182.
[4] *Vir Vinod*, I, p. 1926.
[5] J. Tod, I. p. 176 note 3, p. 211. *Vir Vinod* (II, pp. 250-254, 126) tells of Bapa Vaval, which seems to be a honorific title rather than the ruler's name, which was Mahendra. R. V. Somani (1976), p. 31; R. C. Majumdar, III, pp. 158-159.
[6] J. Tod, I, pp. 176-177, note 4; 182-185; 464-467. *Vir Vinod*, II, p. 127.
[7] Another legend attributes that act to Goha. J. Tod, I, p. 181.
[8] J. Tod, I, p. 231.
[9] Id., I, p. 233.
[10] That was Mahmud II Khalji of Malwa. R.C. Majumdar, VI, p. 340.
[11] J. Tod, I, p. 247.
[12] Id., I, p. 246.
[13] Id., I, p. 250.
[14] Id., I, p. 265.
[15] B.S. Mehta (Udaipur, n.d.), p. 57. R.C. Majumdar, VII, p. 339.
[16] B.S. Mehta, p. 55.
[17] R.C. Majumdar, VII, p. 346.
[18] B.S. Mehta, p. 68.
[19] J. Tod, I, p. 366.
[20] These last incidents are related in B.S. Mehta, p. 78.
[21] J. Tod, II, p. 281.
[22] T.H. Hendley (1897), p. 32.
[23] J. Tod, II, p. 288.
[24] Id., II, p. 19.
[25] Id., II, p. 21.
[26] Id., II, p. 28.
[27] Id., II, p. 86.
[28] Id., II, p. 86.
[29] Id., II, pp. 199-200.
[30] Id., II, p. 147.

PORTRAIT PAINTING

[1] For the clothes and ornaments worn in Rajasthan cf. G.N. Sharma (1968), pp. 142-160; 348-356.

ASPECTS OF CIVIL LIFE

[1] Cf. G.C. Sharma (1979).
[2] L. Rousselet (1975), p. 184.
[3] Id., p. 119.
[4] Id., p. 167; J. Tod, pp. 376-377.
[5] *Vir Vinod*, I, p. 1928.
[6] J. Tod, I, p. 511. Also Bernier (1971, pp. 39-40) and Manucci (1964, p. 181) mention the production and abundant use of opium among the Rajputs.
[7] Id., I, p. 514.
[8] L. Rousselet, p. 102; M. Archer (1962), p. 242 ff.
[9] L. Rousselet, p. 158.
[10] G.N. Sharma (1968), p. 188.

ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

[1] Rousselet, p. 182.
[2] J. Tod, I, p. 452. On the festivals in Rajasthan, cf. also B.N. Sharma (1978) and G.N. Sharma (1968), pp. 166-78.
[3] Id., I, p. 453.
[4] L. Rousselet, p. 184.
[5] Id., p. 189; cf. also J. Tod, I, pp. 454-463, *Vir Vinod*, II, pp. 121-123.
[6] J. Tod, I, p. 467; Dutt (1895, pp. 48-49) also describes this briefly.
[7] *Vir Vinod*, II, p. 123.
[8] L. Rousselet, p. 124.
[9] Id., p. 243. Tavernier (1682) pp. 344-349 also mentions the incredible tests *sadhus* and fakirs subjected themselves to.
[10] Dutt (p. 50) mentions Pushkar.
[11] Id., p. 224.

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WOMEN AND LOVE

[1] J. Tod, I, p. 505.
[2] Id., I, p. 506.
[3] F. Bernier (1891), pp. 309-310. Also Tavernier (1682), pp. 349-362, mentions the terrible custom of *jôhar* and he describes some episodes he witnessed.
[4] The translation of Mirabai's still unpublished poems is by Dr. Paolo Imperio. The poetess was born in *circa* 1498 at Merta in Marwar; she married the son of Maharana Sanga of Mewar and then went to live in the fortress of Chitor; however, she was soon left a widow and, challenging strict social rules, she left her husband's family to devote herself to a wandering and ascetic life.
[5] *Games in Indian Miniatures* (1982), fig. 1.
[6] J. Tod, I, p. 497.
[7] Id., I, p. 494; E. Bernier, pp. 40-41; *Vir Vinod*, I, pp. 824-825.
[8] J. Tod, I, p. 502.
[9] Id., I, p. 495.
[10] Id., I, pp. 496-497.

RĀJĀS AND THEIR ENTERTAINMENTS

[1] L. Rousselet, p. 242.
[2] Id., p. 108; this description refers to a match which took place in Baroda.
[3] Id., p. 105. Thevenot (1949, ch. 21, p. 38) also describes animal fights.
[4] Rousselet, p. 106.
[5] Id., p. 199.
[6] *Games in Indian Miniatures* (1982). For all recreational activities of kings in general, also see G.N. Sharma (1968), pp. 130-142.

HUNTING

[1] L. Rousselet, p. 172 ff.
[2] Id., p. 268.
[3] See A. Kumar Das (1967), p. 20.
[4] A. Kumar Das (1967), p. 21.
[5] J. Tod, II, p. 407; W.G. Archer (1959), p. 7.
[6] See H. Davenport (1975), p. 33.

THE COLLECTIONS OF MINIATURES OF THE RĀJĀS

[1] See *Gita Govinda*, XII (Shrijayadeva 1957).
[2] See A.L. Dallapiccola, (1977), p. 3.
[3] Id. (1977), p. 30.
[4] A.L. Dallapiccola, *Princesses et courtisanes à travers les miniatures indiennes*, Paris, 1978.

LATER COURT PAINTING IN RAJASTHAN

[1] See D. Ehnbom (1984-85).
[2] See L. Shiveshwarkar (1967). Khandalavala and M. Chandra (1969); it contains an extensive study of pre-Mughal painting in India: for a critique of some considerations by the authors, see P. Chandra (1976) and Ehnbom, *op. cit.*
[3] Abu'l Fazl, *'Ain-i Akbari*, I, pp. 108-109.
[4] Tod, *Annals*, (1920), I, p. 495.
[5] *Ibid.*, II, p. 656.
[6] *Ibid.*, III, p. 1755 also pp.1786 and 1819.

THE ROYAL RAJPUT ARCHITECTURE

[1] The quotations from the *Bhāgavad-gītā* are taken from the translation by Juan Mascaro, Harmondsworth, 1962.
[2] Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor* (1699-1709) transl. W. Irvine, 4 vols. London, 1907-8, Vol. 2 p. 437.
[3] Babur-nama; transl. Annette S. Beveridge, *The Babur-nama in English*, 2 vols., London, 1921, Vol. 2 p. 595.
[4] Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, London, 1978 p. 12.
[5] Ibid., p. 4.
[6] Louis Rousselet, *India and its Native Princes*, ed. Lt. Col. Buckle, London, 1876 p. 237.
[7] Girouard, op. cit., p. 6.
[8] Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (1927), repr. New York, 1965 p. 15.
[9] *Babur-nama*; transl. Annette S. Beveridge, op. cit., vol. 2 p. 520.
[10] Richard Lannoy, *The Speaking Tree* O.U.P. 1971, repr. 1975 p. 17.
[11] « Rajaprasasti Inscription of Udaipur », ed N.P. Chakravarti and B.Ch. Chhabra, Appendix to *Epigraphia Indica* Vols. XXIX, XXX, Delhi 1957, 1958; Vol. XXIX Part 1, Appendix p. 3.
Cf. Ratna Chandra Agarawala, « Some Famous Sculptors and Architects of Mewar », *Indian Historical Quarterly* vol. 33 No. 4 Dec. 1957 pp. 321-34; pp. 331-2.
[12] Coomaraswamy, op. cit., p. 84.
[13] Ibid., p. 128.
[14] For example, by Hermann Goetz, who speaks of « the overwhelming cultural influence... of the Mughal Emperors... »; Goetz, ' Bondela Art ' (1938), repr., in *Rajput Art and Architecture*, Wiesbaden, 1978, p. 119.
[15] For example, by Calude Batley, *The Design Development of Indian Architecture* (1934) 3rd ed. London, 1973 p. 36.
[16] The only other exception, and a partial one, is the *garh* pa-

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lace of Bikaner which is built on a plain. The comparatively late foundation of Bikaner suggests that the Rajputs felt some reluctance about building in this district which lacks hills.

[17] P. Brown, *Indian Architecture*, Bombay, 1972, vol. 2 p. 23, suggests rather a derivation from « the castellated palaces of the Roman and Byzantine empires, such as the palace of Diocletian at Spalato... ».

[18] For example, by Bamber Gascoigne, *The Great Moghuls*, London, 1971 pp. 35, 96.

[19] Brown, op. cit., vol. 2 p. 120.

[20] Lannoy, op. cit., pp. 46-7.

[21] Brown, op. cit., vol. 2 p. 118.

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COLOUR PLATES

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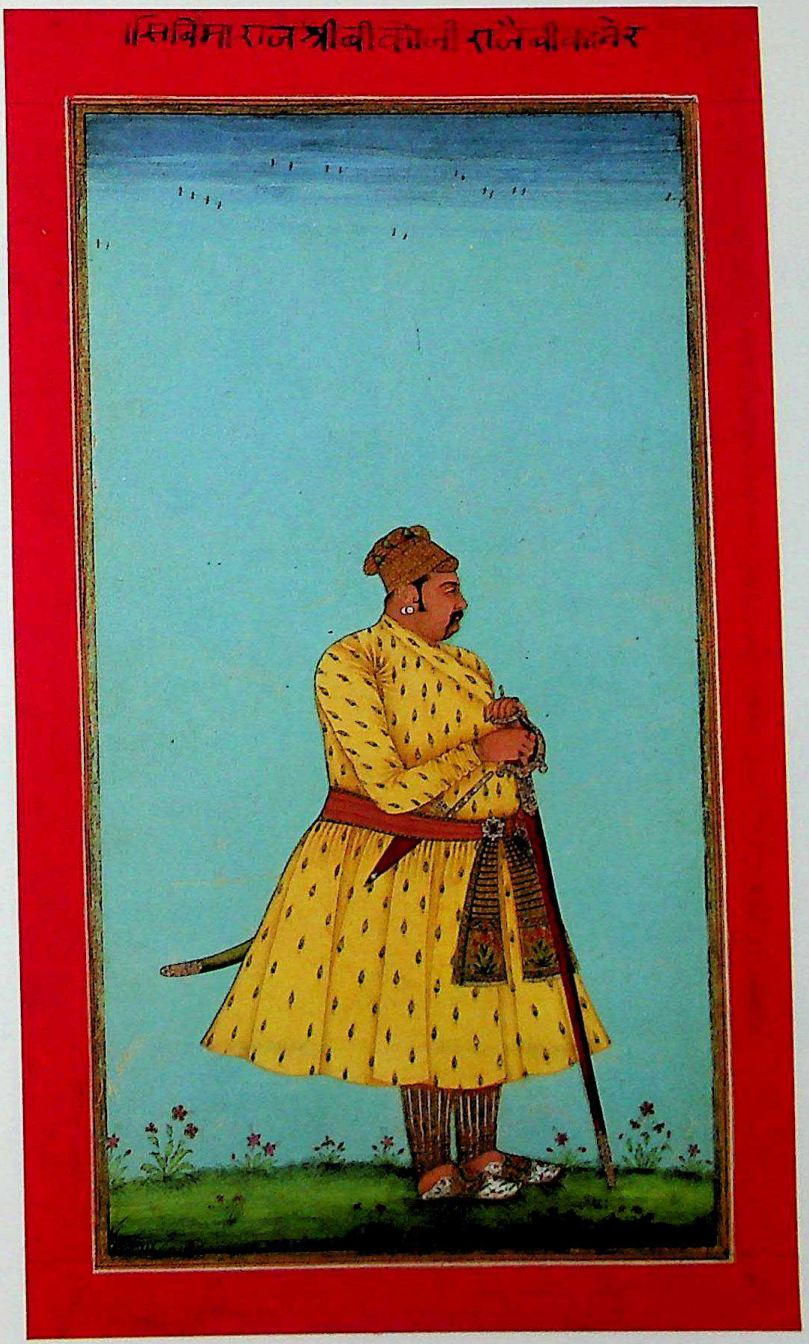

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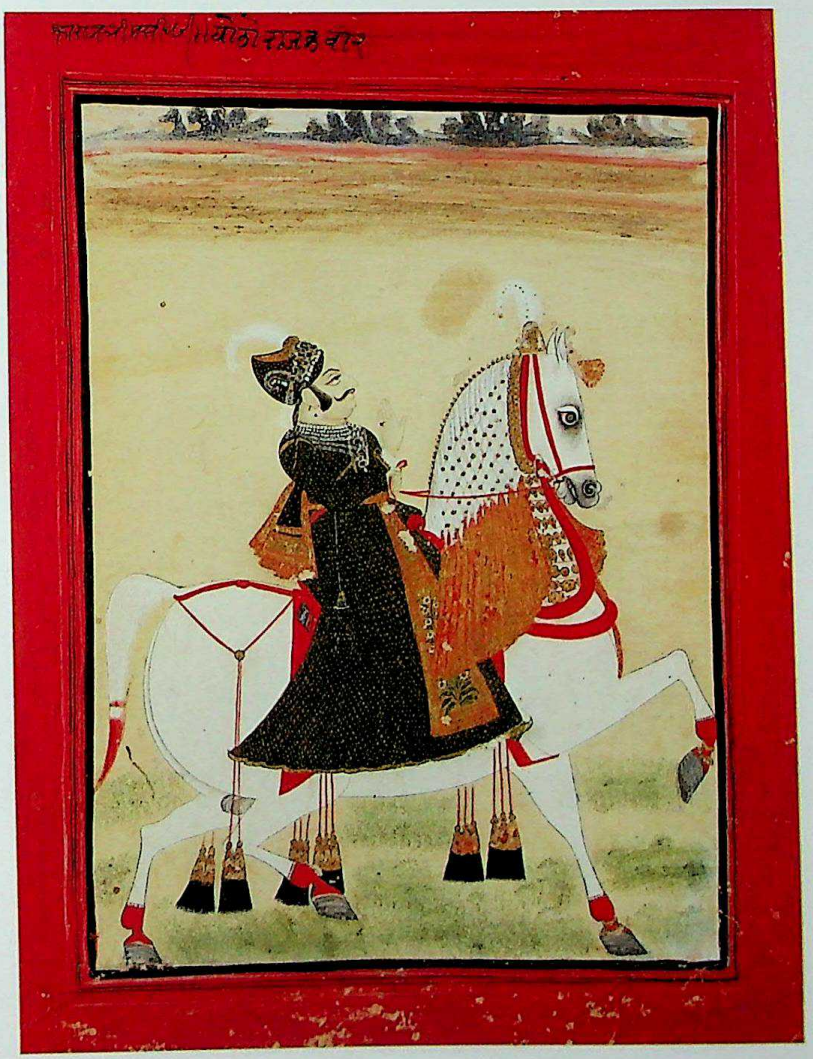

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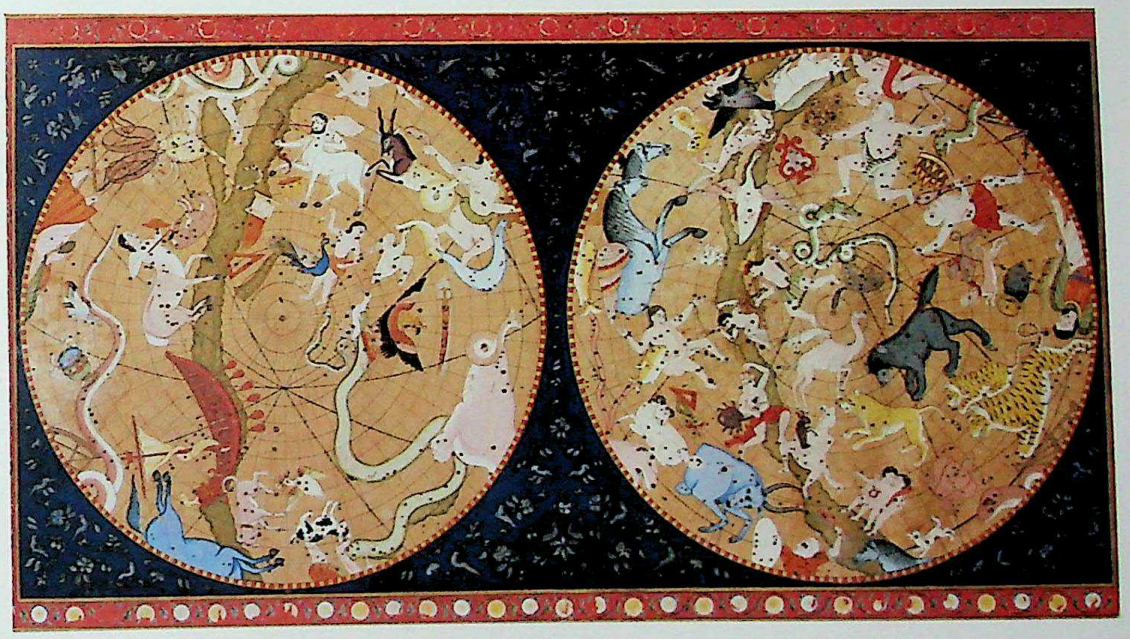

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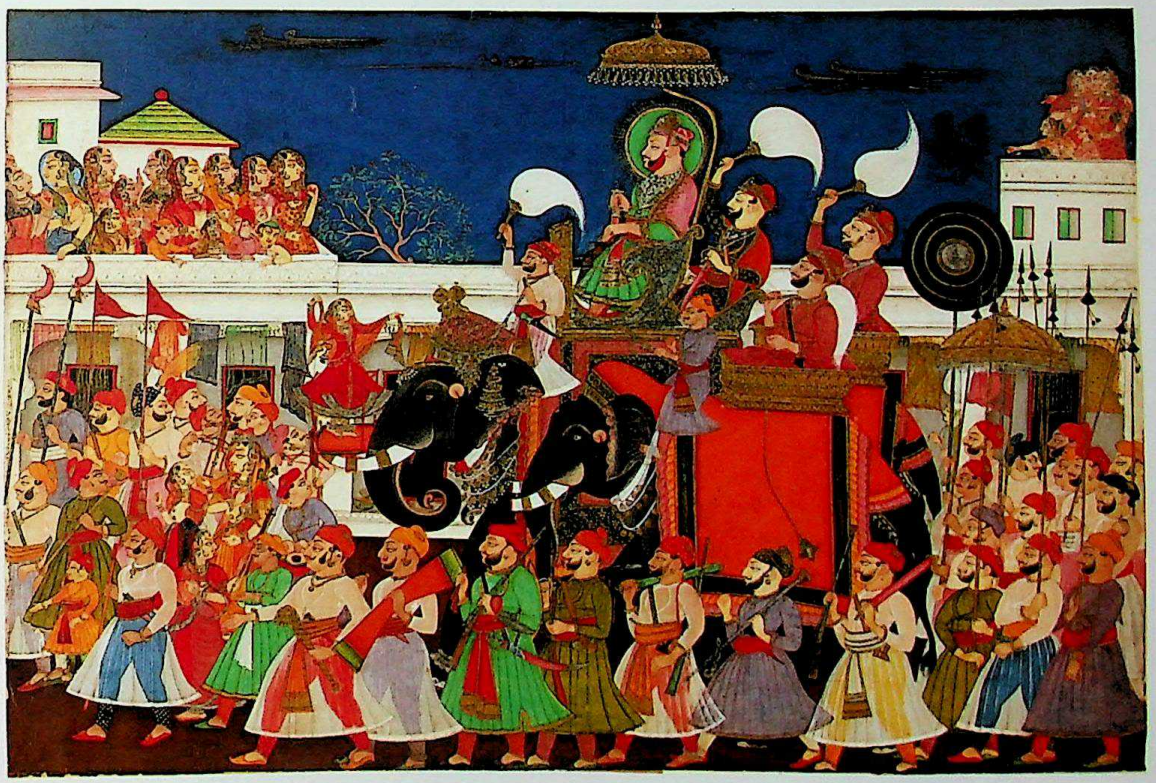

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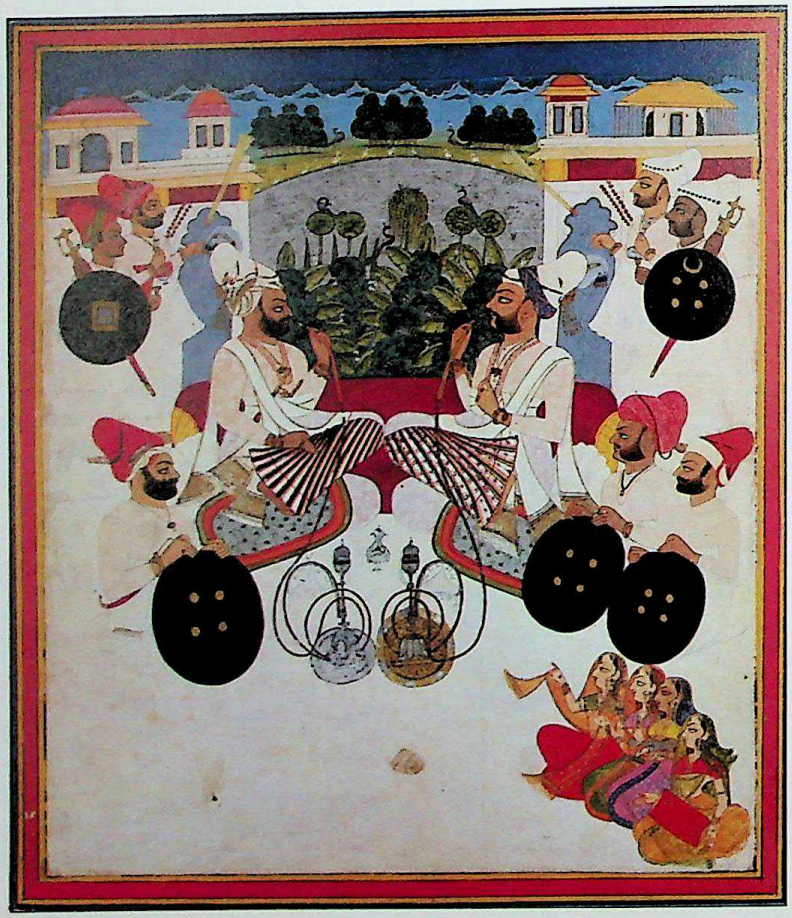

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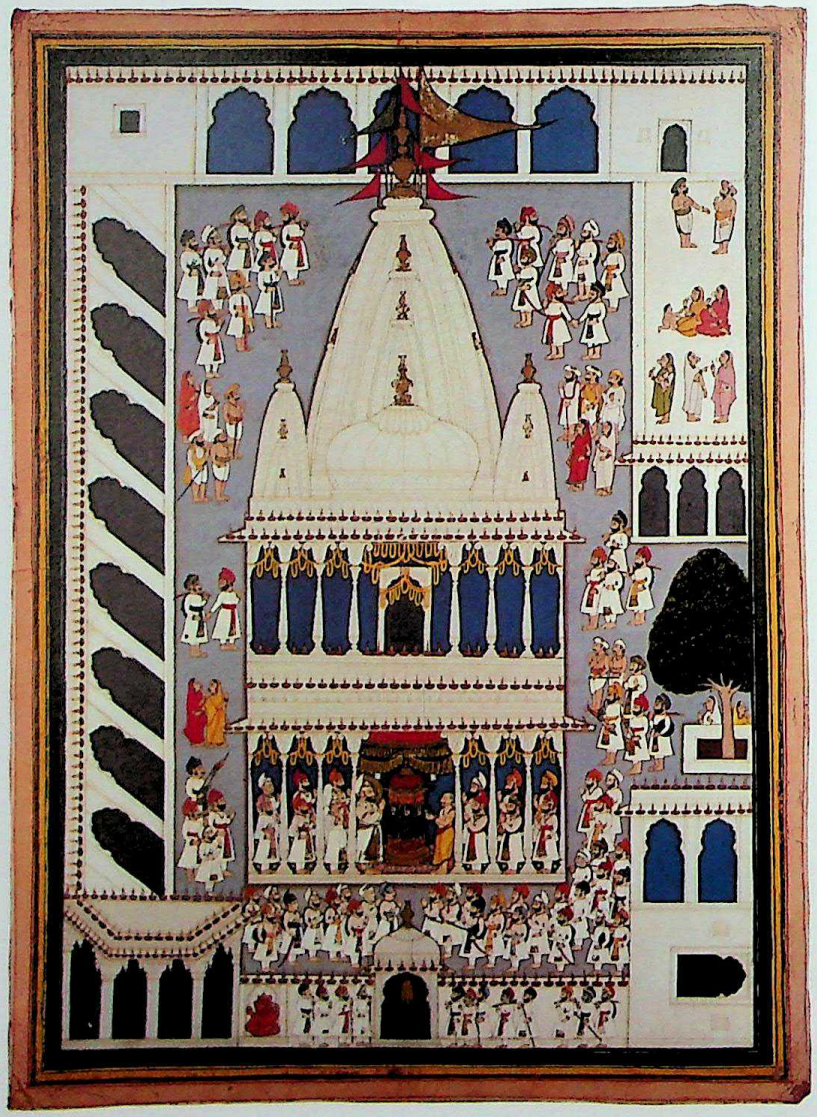

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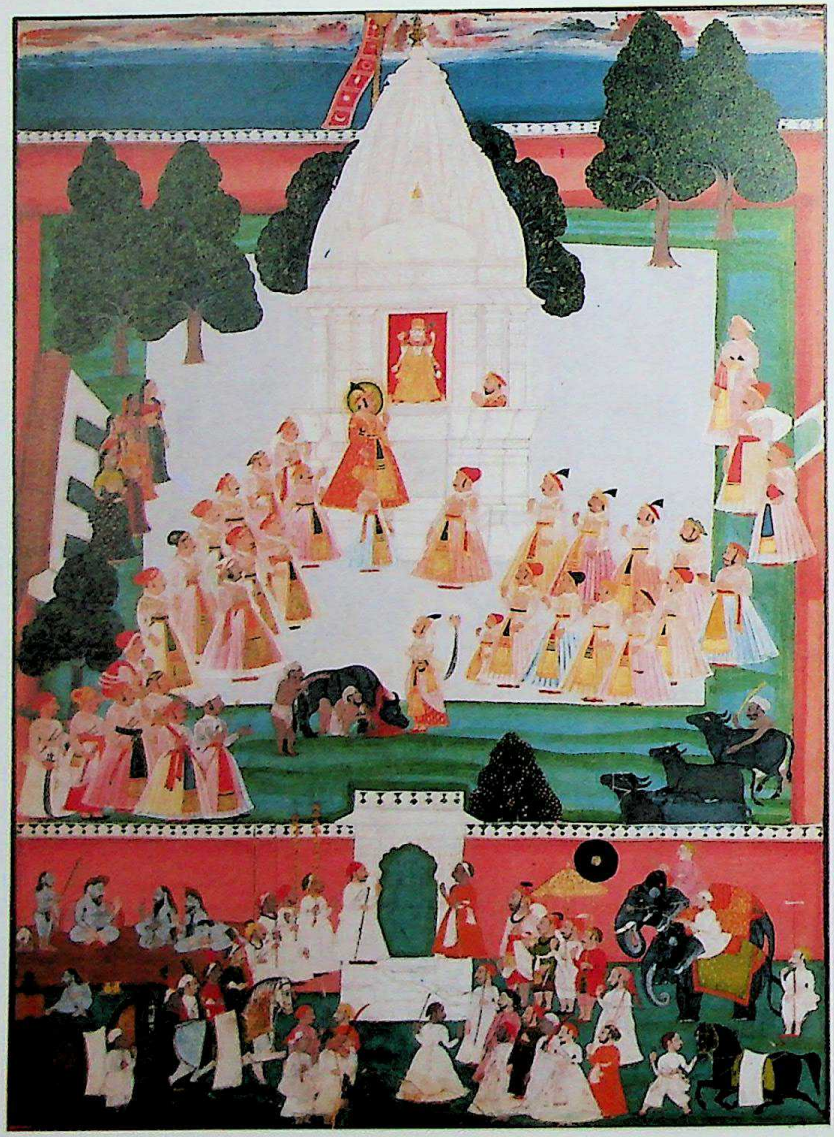

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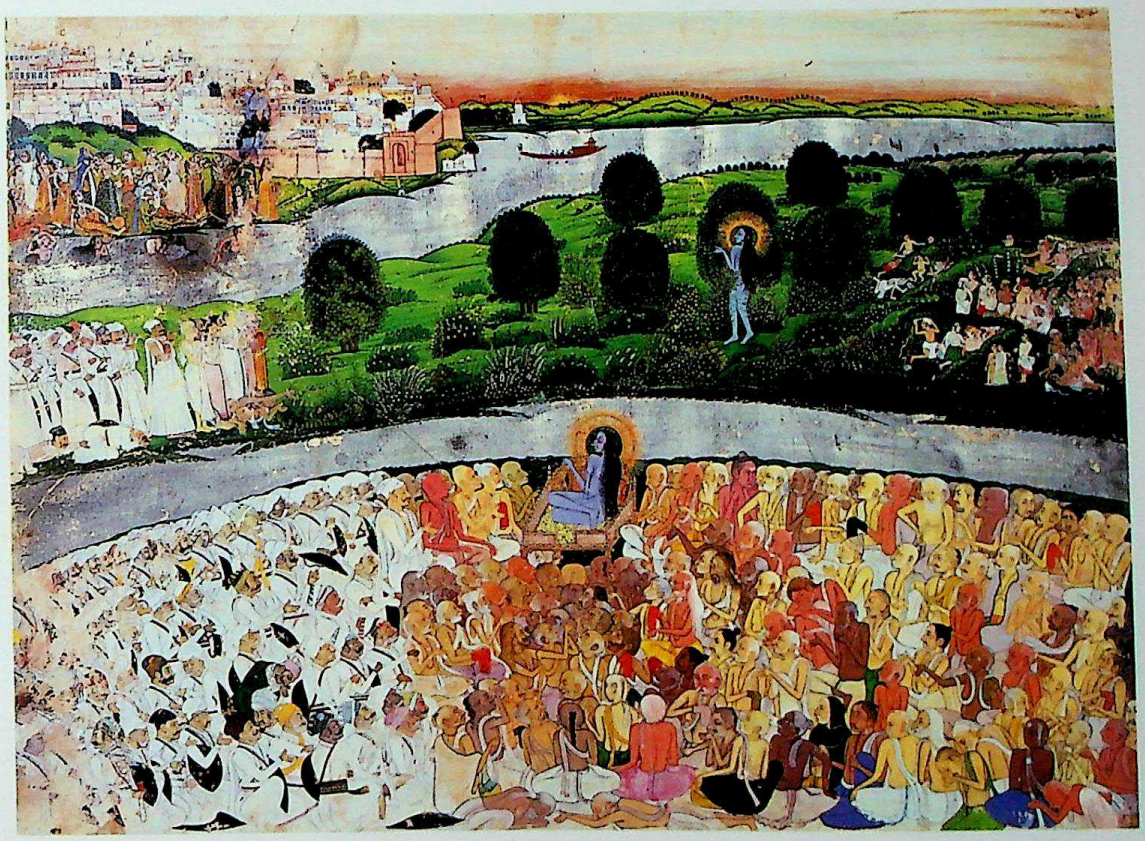

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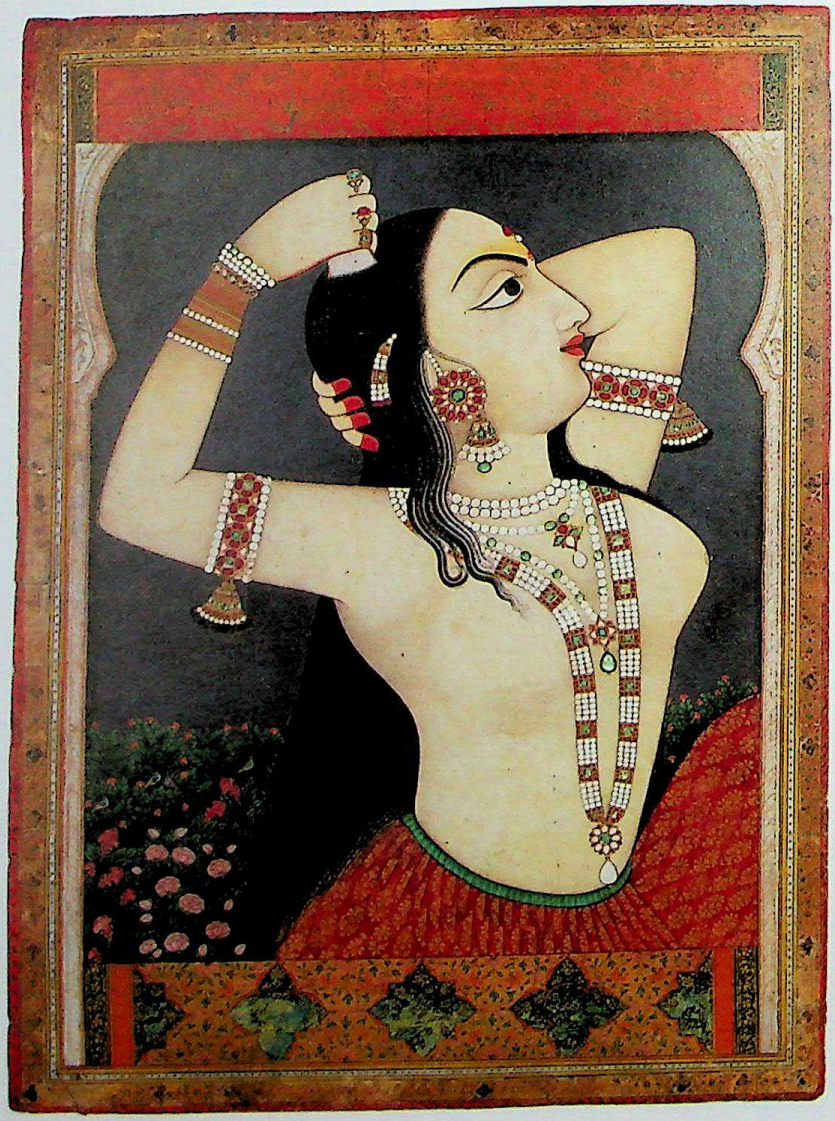

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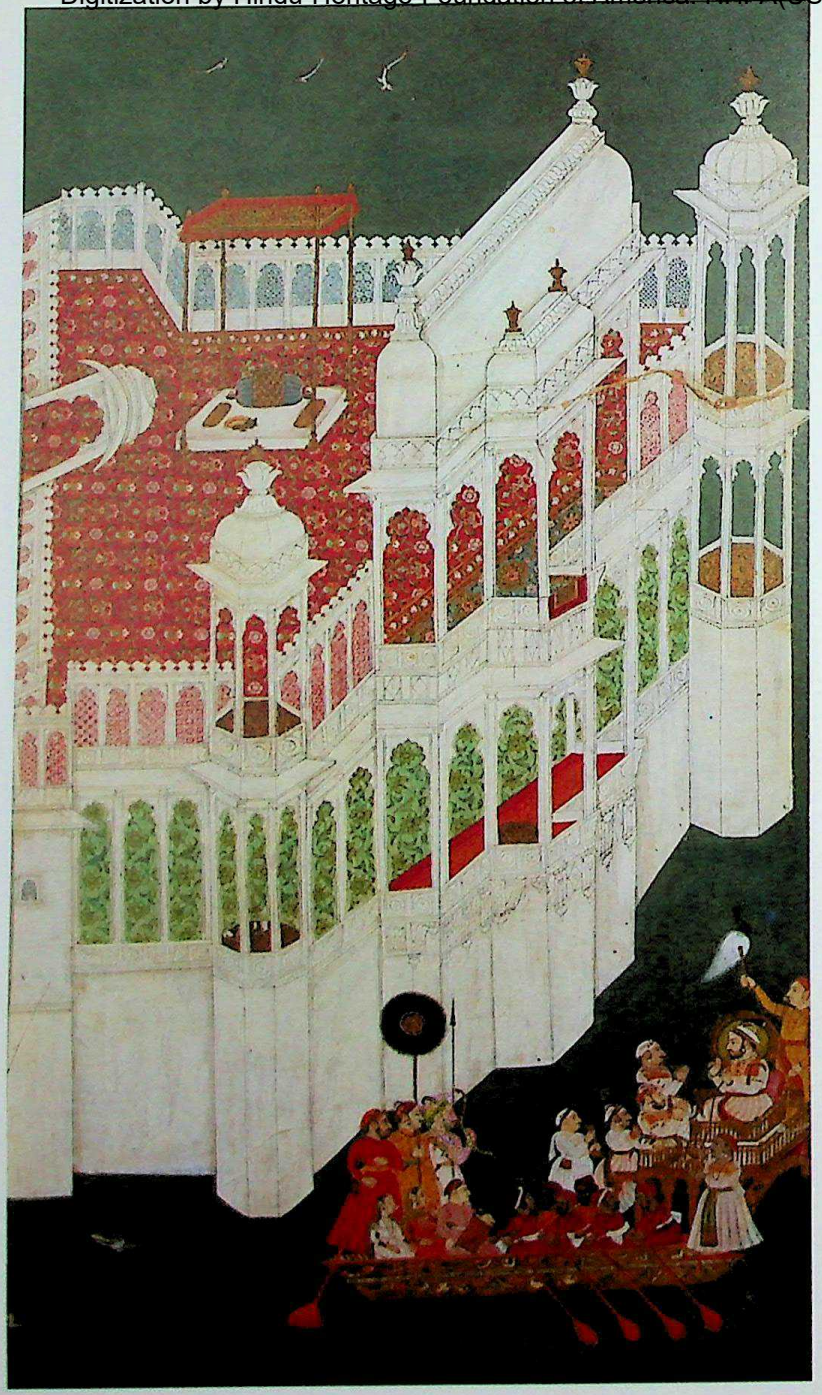

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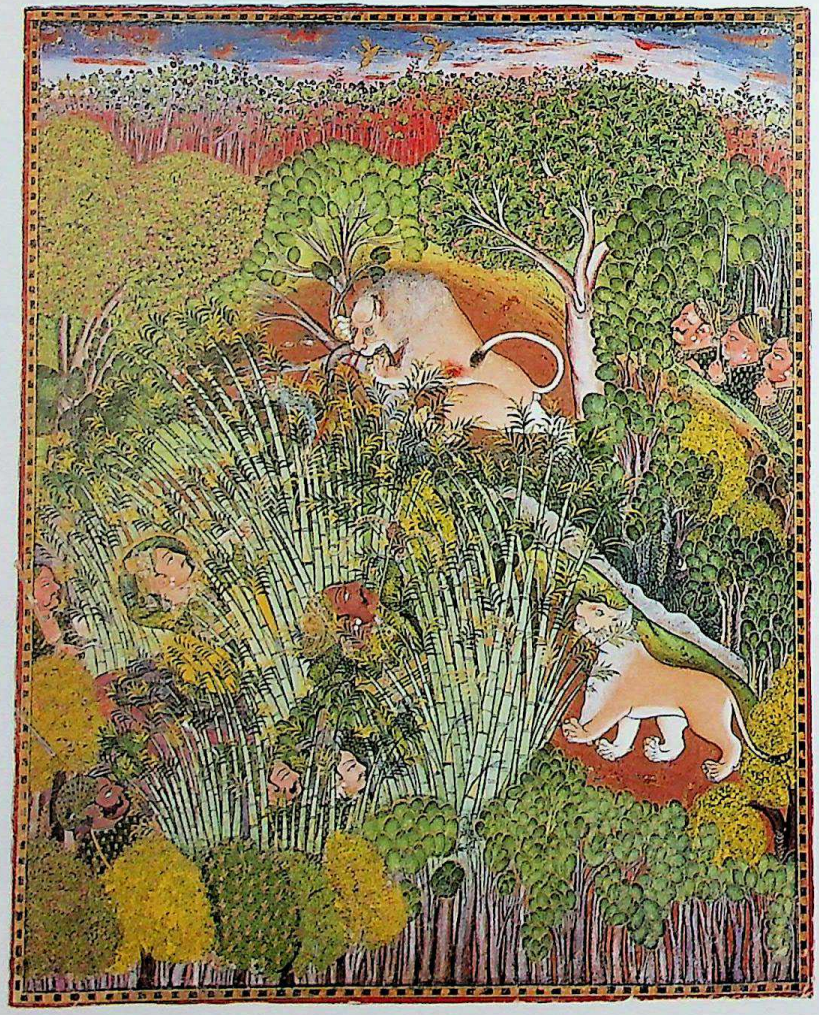

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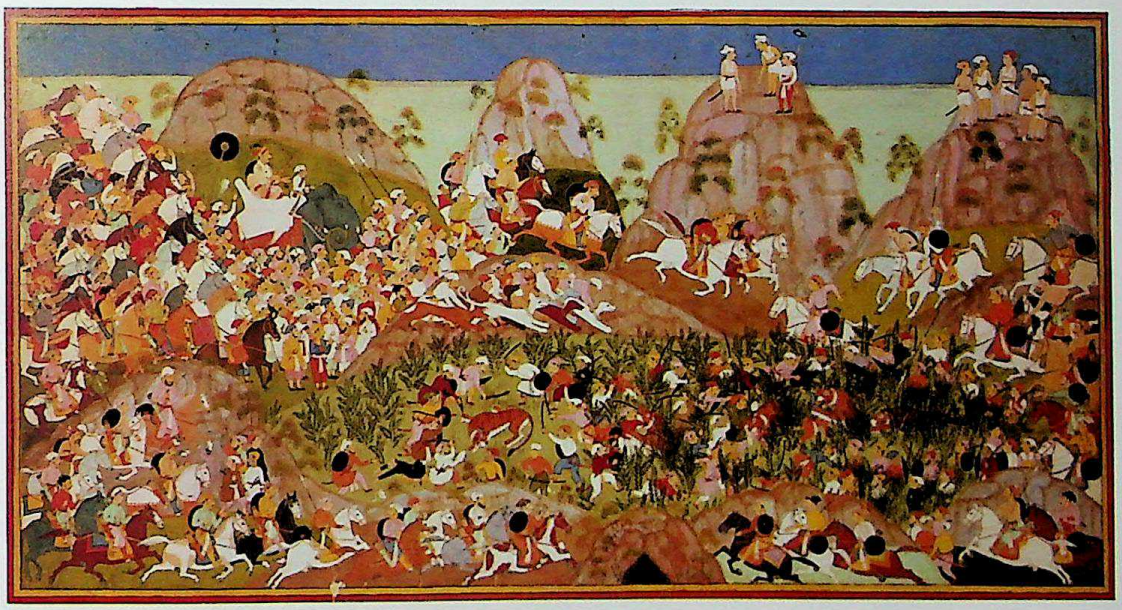

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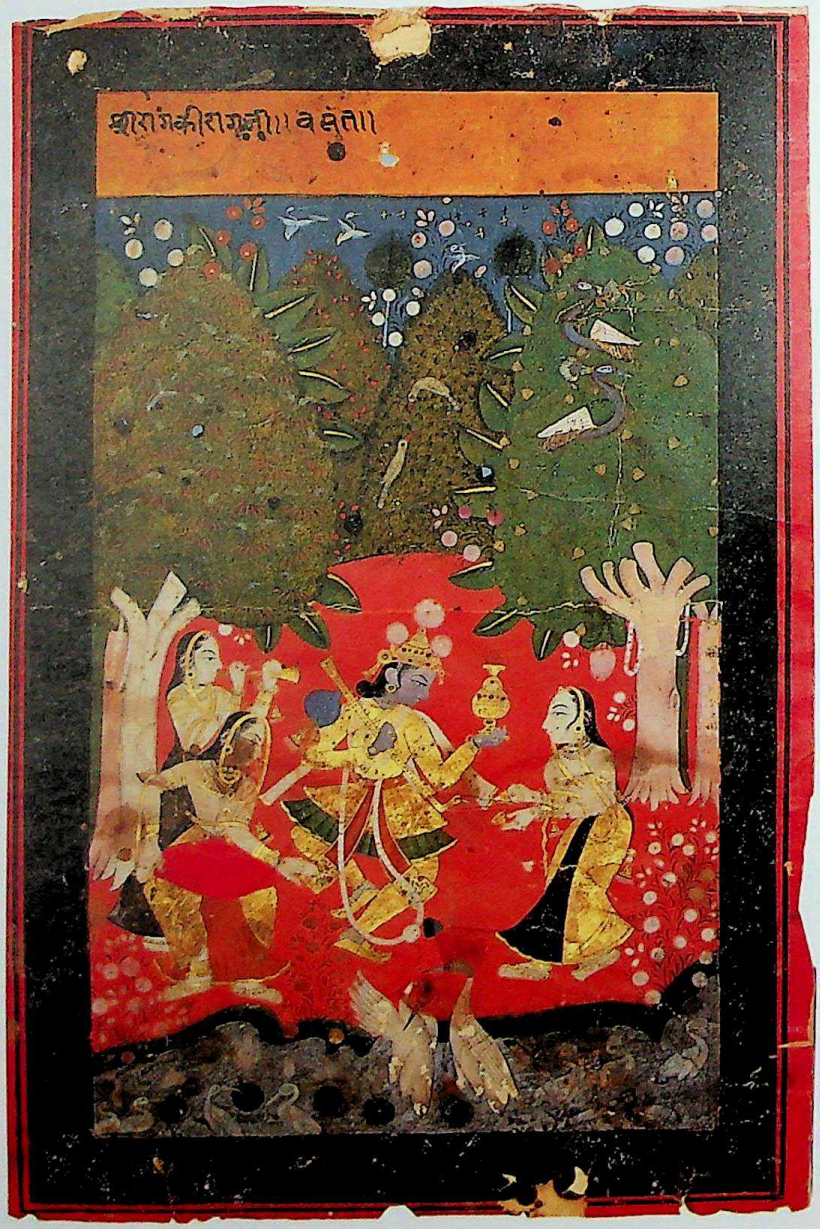

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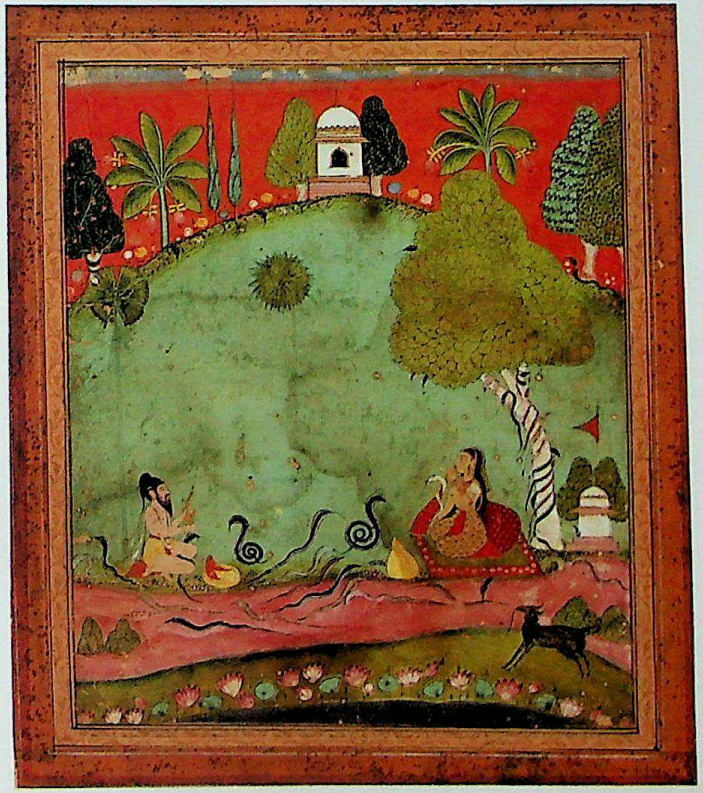

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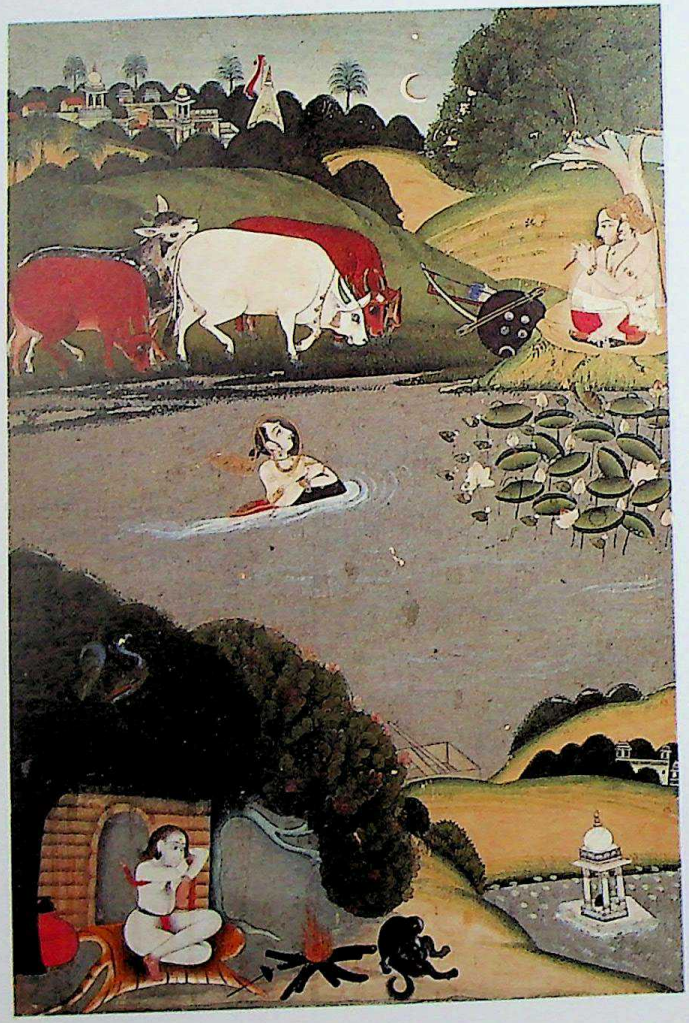

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CATALOGUE

Descriptions with the initials A.T. are by Dr. Andrew Topsfield. All the others are by the author.

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1. A PORTRAIT OF THE MAHĀRĀJĀ SIBI ŚRĪ BIKAJI (1488-1505)

Bikaner, late 17th century
Gouache*, *23.2 x 13 cm.;*
31.5 x 18.5 cm. with border
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
88 IM 288 - 1914

Śrī Bikaji, the sixth son of the Rāo Jodhaji of Marwar, was the founder of the state of Bikaner (1488).

The *rājā* is portrayed standing, wearing a short tunic (*jāmā*), his hands resting on the precious hilt of a long sword; a dagger with a double hilt (*kaṭār*) is inserted in the sash girding his waist (*paṭ'kā*). The little turban, just like the *jāmā*, is in the Moghul fashion; the Moghul element is anyway apparent in the whole figure. The meadow and sky are just suggested by a few flowers and tiny birds.

* The painting technique of miniatures consists in the application of dull or transparent colours distempered in water, with the addition of white; hence they may be described as *gouache* or dull water-colours.

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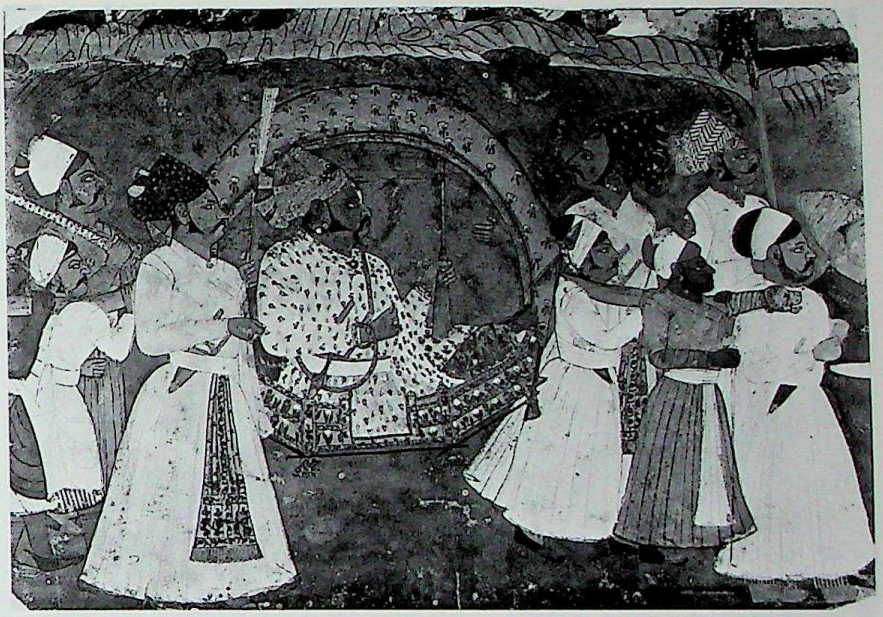
2. THE MAHĀRĀJĀ JASWANT SINGH OF JAISALMER (1702-c. 1710) IN A PALANQUIN

Jaisalmer, c. 1710
Gouache, *21.7 x 31 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
92 IS 120 - 1955

B. Gray (1948), pl 7;
L. Ashton (ed.) (1950), p. 120, No. 455;
W.G. Archer (1960), fig. 53.

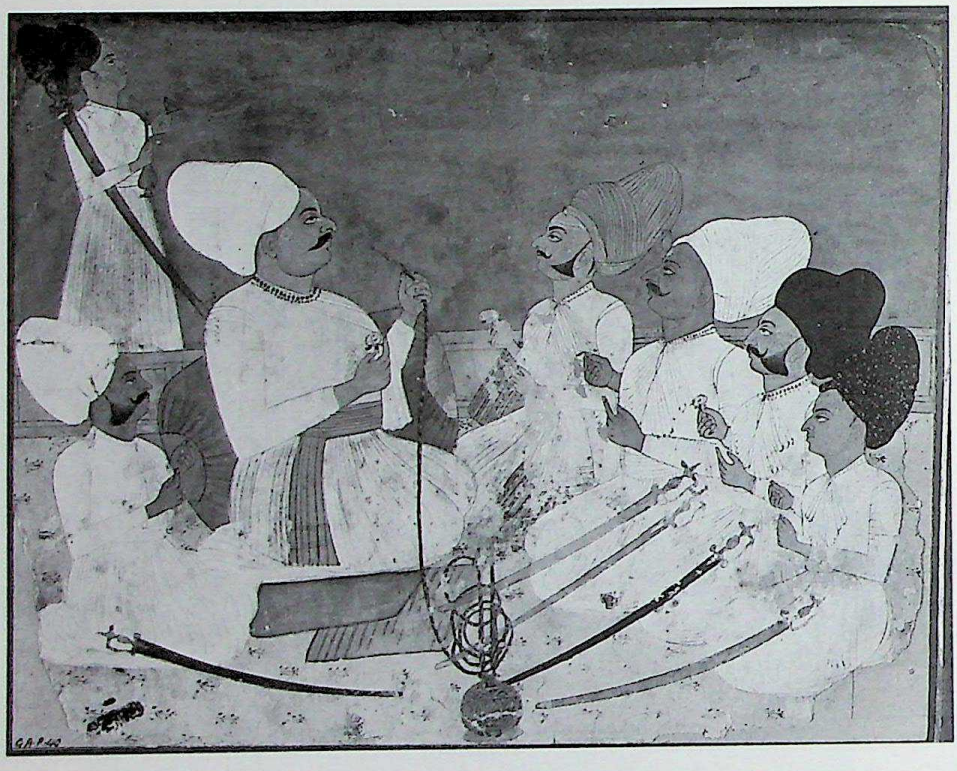


The *rājā*, whose name is indicated by an inscription in Hindi at the back of the miniature – *Śrī 108 Śrī juāā Saut Singhjī* – cf. also T.H. Hendley [1897], pl. 13, No. 4) is being carried by some servants on an octagonal palanquin, with a hog-backed roof decorated with flowers. he wears a *jāmā* in the Moghul fashion fastened on one side and a big turban, typical of the north-western area of Rajasthan, adorned in the front with a jewel; he holds a rifle in one hand, while a long dagger (*kaṭār*) is inserted in the sash girding his waist. He is preceded and followed by servants and attendants, also wearing *jāmās*; on some of them one can easily see the *paṭ'kā*, a sash usually made of brocade hanging on the front of the gown; one should notice how the palanquin-bearers are portrayed in smaller proportions than the other figures, possibly dignitaries, to point out their subordinate role.

The horizon is closed by a series of rocky hills, whose conventional shape, typical of Moghul art, derives from ancient Persian miniature painting and was handed down in the course of time, though it changed with ever-increasing stylization and simplification.

The sharpness of the portraits of the figures, with their characteristic drooping moustache and small expressive eyes, is typical of the western areas of Rajasthan, which show fewer traces of Moghul influence, owing to their being virtually desert, hence of a difficult access.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)



3. THE MAHĀRĀJĀ AJIT SINGH (1678-1725) WITH HIS SONS AND GRANDSONS

Jodhpur, c. 1725
Gouache, *22 x 28.5 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
86 IS 257 - 1952

M. M. Denech (1971), pl. 40.

The *rājā* is sitting on a terrace on a small carpet, leaning against a cylindrical bolster; he is smoking a water-pipe (*ḥuqqā*) while conversing with his sons and grandsons, also sitting in front of him, with swords by their sides and flowers in their hands, symbolizing the poetical and sensitive soul of this people. Behind the balustrade of the terrace an attendant is bringing a long sword, a jug and a tumbler.

All the figures wear big turbans, typical of the Jodhpur region.

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4. A PORTRAIT OF THE MAHĀRĀJĀ JASWANT SINGH I (1635-c. 1678)

Jodhpur, c. 1750
Gouache, *30 x 20 cm.*
Private collection, Milan

Miniature indiane del XVIII secolo (1977), p. 14, fig. 10.

The *rājā* is portrayed standing, his hands resting on a sword; he wears a broad tunic, from under which tight trousers and babouches come out; his waist is girded by a double sash (*pāṭ'kā*) in which a dagger (*kaṭār*) is inserted; the sheath of his sword and his shield appear through the garment; his fingers, neck and ears are adorned with precious jewels. The small turban belongs to the period he lived in and is characteristic of Shah Jahan's court. On the whole the composition derives from Moghul miniature painting; here, however, the features of the face are sharper and more marked, just as the whole shows less refinement in style.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

5. THE MAHĀRĀJĀ RAM SINGH OF JODHPUR (1750) ON HORSEBACK

Jodhpur, c. 1750
Gouache, *30 x 20 cm.; 33 x 27.5 cm. with border*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 281 - 1951

W.G. Archer (1956), fig. 10

The composition of this miniature, characteristic of official portraits in Rajput courts, derives from Moghul art; a formal simplification has been brought about by eliminating the background landscape, so that the figure appears more hieratical and fixed.

The king is riding a horse, wearing a high turban (*pag'rī*) typical of the Marwar region, a white *jāmā* and a short cloak; he is smoking a water-pipe (*ḥuqqā*) lifted by a servant walking by his side and is surrounded by servants carrying royal emblems: two *caurī* (fly-whisks), a staff of command supported by the *cūb'dār*, the Master of Ceremonies, a *mur'chal*, namely a fan made of peacock feathers, and another decorated in the shape of a heart.

This miniature was dated on the basis of the only year of reign of this king. A similar portrait, published by R. Cran (1980), shows the then prince with younger features and is dated to about a decade earlier.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

6. A STOUT NOBLEMAN,
BĀBĀ BHARATH SINGH

Udaipur, c. 1750
Gouache, *38.5 x 20 cm.*
Private collection

Published: A. Topsfield (1982), fig. 6

Bābā Bharath Singh (of Shahpura, according to the inscription) stands wearing a white *jāma*, a gold and crimson turban, a flowered *patka* and gold-embroidered slippers, his right hand holding a tall arm-rest, against a green background with streaky cloud above. In court scenes of the period of Mahārāṇā Jagat Singh (e.g. n. 75, dated 1736, where he sits at the far right of the line of nobles watching the *Rāsalīlā* performance), Bharath Singh is depicted as no more than ordinarily corpulent; see also S. Czuma (1975), no. 67 (if this is in fact the same man). The present portrait and no. 6, with which it forms a pair, are unusually unflattering studies of obesity and were evidently painted with a satirical intention. This may have resulted from the hostility in the late 1740s between Mahārāṇā Jagat Singh and several of his nobles, including Bābā Bharath Singh (« Bābā » was a title given to members of a cadet branch of the Mewar royal family). Some time before the end of Jagat Singh's reign, his younger brother Nathji, together with Bharath Singh and others, had plotted to poison the heir apparent Pratap Singh, who had been imprisoned for an earlier rebellion, and to place Nathji on the throne. However, news of the affair leaked out and the Mahārāṇā banished all the plotters from Udaipur (K.S. Gupta, 1971, p. 67).

A.T.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

7. BĀBĀ BHARATH SINGH IN A STATE OF UNDRESS

Udaipur, c. 1750
Gouache, *38.7 cm. x 20 cm.*
Private collection

A. Topsfield (1982) fig. 7;
A. Topsfield (1984), pl. 28

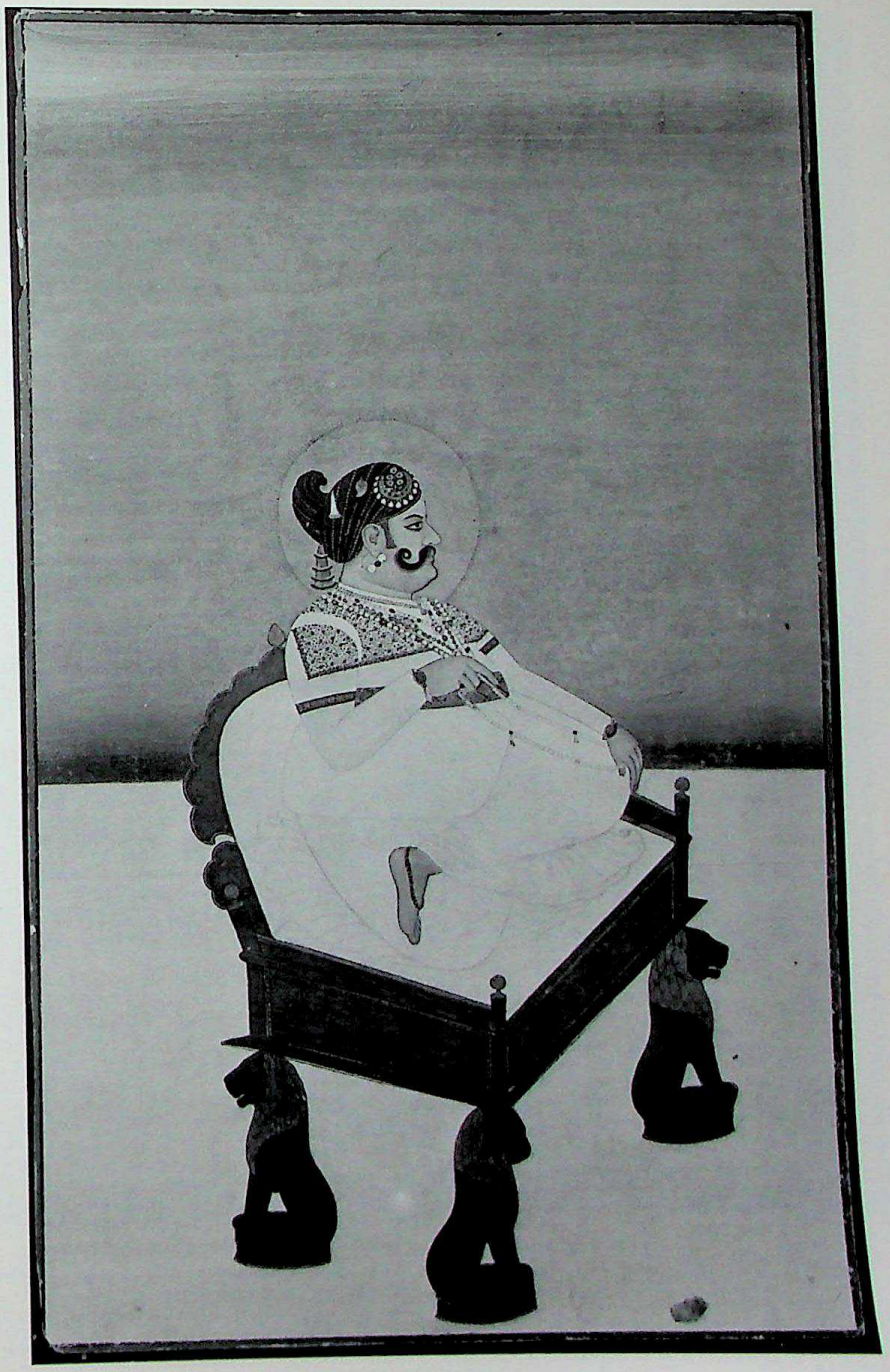
In this unflattering portrait, a companion piece to no. 5, Bābā Bharath Singh is shown bare-chested and barefoot, wearing a striped pink *pāyjāma* and a striped pale blue cummerbund around his enormous girth. He raises to his drooping mouth a small green morsel (a sweetmeat, or the narcotic sweet *mā'jūn*?).

A.T.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

8. MAHĀRĀJĀ MADHO SINGH OF JAIPUR (1760-1778) ON A LION THRONE

Udaipur, c. 1760-65, after a Jaipur painting by the artist Ramji
Gouache, *26 x 16 cm.*
Private collection



The Mahārājā, with a gold nimbus and wearing a black turban and white *jāma*, sits on an (oxidised) silver throne, supported by lion figures with gilded manes, on a white terrace, with a pale green background and streaky cloud above. He rests one arm on a white bolster and holds a rosary (*mālā*) in both hands. A rough outline drawing of the same subject appears on the back of the picture.

Madho Singh, even more than other Rajput rulers of his period, was a keen collector of portraits of himself, showing him seated or standing, with his heavy bulk and fiercely twirled moustaches. Albums full of such portraits were regularly presented to him by his artists, and many of these were the work of Ramji (or Ramji Das): see A.K. Das (1981) for a study of his *oeuvre*; also O.P. Sharma (1974) pl. 58 and A. Topsfield (1980) no. 27 and especially no. 28 for comparable portraits by him of Madho Singh. The present painting is in fact a Mewar copy of one of Ramji's portraits and is comparable in this respect to A. Topsfield (1980) no. 183, which may have been copied by the Mewar artist Bakhta from a Ramji portrait. As his mother was an Udaipur princess, Madho Singh himself had strong links with Mewar. During the 1740s his bid for the Jaipur throne had been expensively and fruitlessly supported by his uncle, Mahārāṇā Jagat Singh (see no. 89, in which Madho Singh is received by Jagat Singh at an elephant fight at Udaipur).

A.T.

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9. RĀJĀ WITH HIS RETINUE

Rajasthan, second half of the 18th century
Gouache, *24 x 36 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IM 82 - 1922

B. Gray (n.d.), fig. 6.

The king, wearing a long tunic (*jāmā*) with a floral design, a decorated belt (*paṭ'kā*) and a high turban (*pag'ṛī*), is possibly going for a beat, riding a horse with a white caparison; the animal's mane is carefully combed in small pigtails and a pretty plume stands on its head. Attendants, officers (*sar'dārs*) and hunting staff (*śikārīs*) precede and follow the king, carrying long spears, quivers, bows and arrows, rifles wrapped in their cases, besides royal insignia, namely a round emblem and a *mur'chal*.

This miniature has been variously attributed to different regions: Kishangarh, Jodhpur, Bikaner (cf. the Victoria and Albert Museum file-card); in fact the style of these schools may sometimes blend. One should be reminded that the royal families of Bikaner and of Kishangarh both belong to the Rathor clan of Jodhpur.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

10. MAHĀRĀJĀ BHIM SINGH OF JODHPUR (1793-1803) RIDING THE HORSE RAJ KUNVAR

Udaipur, early 19th century, after a Jodhpur painting
Gouache, *31 x 22 cm.*
Private collection

The Mahārājā, wearing an olive-green turban and *jāma* printed in pink and yellow and a flowered gold *paṭkā*, rides the white stallion Raj Kunvar (« Prince »), with red and gold trappings and gold tassels attached to its artfully plaited mane. Cream background with streaky cloud above.

It was customary for Rajput rulers to give and receive portraits of themselves, and at Udaipur (and elsewhere) these pictures would often be copied by the local court artists (see also no. 7). The present picture of the ruler of Jodhpur was probably copied for Mahārāṇā Bhim Singh of Mewar (1778-1828). Another, very similar portrait of Mahārājā Bhim Singh, riding a different horse, is ascribed to the Udaipur artist Bhopa, son of Naga, who was active in the late 18th century (see Topsfield, 1980, nos. 154, 171-72, 197 for four of his paintings dating from the 1760s). This painting, which is in a private collection, was probably copied from a Jodhpur picture and may have served as the model for the present portrait.

A.T.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

11. A PORTRAIT OF THE MAHĀRĀJĀ PRATAP SINGH (1779-1803)

Jaipur, late 18th century
Gouache, *19.9 x 13.7 cm.*
Rietberg Museum, Zürich, 1090

R. Skelton (1960), pp. 46-47, fig. 23

The *rājā* is portrayed standing with his hands resting on a type of sabre (*tal'vār*); he wears a yellow *jāmā* with symmetrical pleats, coming down to the feet in the shape of a wide bend on the lower hem, which is rather unusual in late miniatures.

His waist is girded by a wide sash (*paṭ'kā*) in which a dagger is inserted. The turban, with a tall plume, is richly bedecked with jewels.

The lawn on which the king stands and the hilly landscape fading away high in the horizon are merely outlined. In contrast, the sky is lively and fanciful, with its manifold clouds, and betrays the influence of late Moghul painting particularly of the Lucknow school.

One remarks the stylistic difference between this miniature and the two preceding ones, Nos. 1 and 4, where Moghul influence is more apparent. The figure of Pratap Singh, however, keeping the same posture, shows a more cursory stylistic treatment; yet an equally noteworthy liveliness and sharpness in looks are apparent. One should note also how in later miniature-painting garments tend to grow longer towards the feet and to describe a narrower bend on the lower hem.

For a similar portrait see A. Topsfield (1980), fig. 30.

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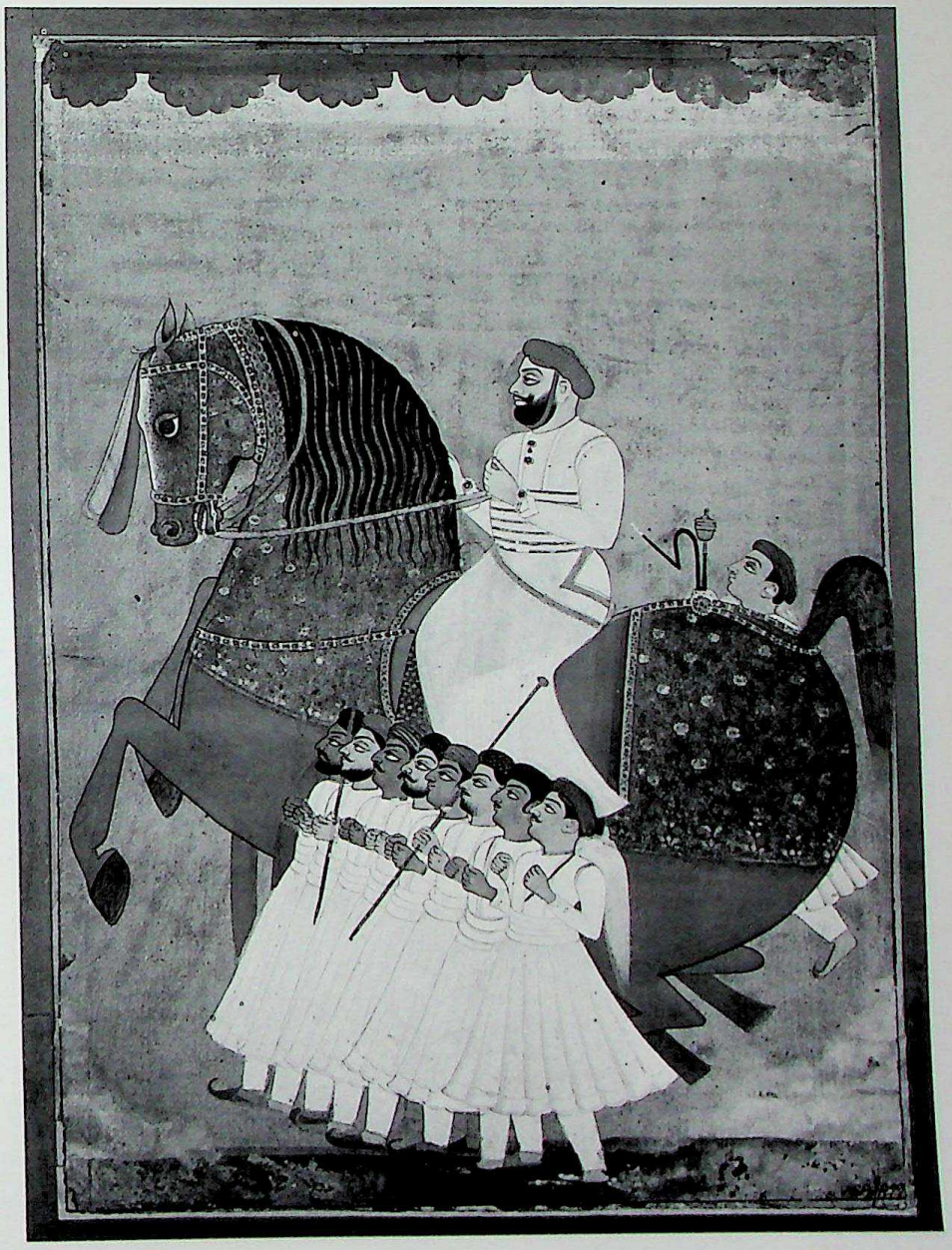
12. NOBLEMAN ON HORSEBACK

Jodhpur, 1836
Gouache, *33 x 25 cm; 28.5 x 21 cm. with border*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 143 - 1952



A nobleman rides a red horse with a dark-blue caparison and wears a white *jāmā* with a high sash on his waist and a small hat. Behind the horse a servant carries a *ḥuqqā*, while eight others flank him, bearing thin staffs and a *caurī*.

The figures stand out against a uniform sky; stylized clouds seem to form a festooned decoration above; that points to a late date of the miniature, along with iconographic and stylistic features, the contrasting effects of bright colours, the symmetrical arrangement of the eight servants and the more cursory treatment of the faces. Notwithstanding its immobility, however, the whole composition is very effective, showing sharpness and descriptive strength.

The inscription on the back can be read with difficulty: *Mīr Shājī (Khajī?), saṃvat 1892.*

The figure depicted here shows a certain likeness to the Nawab Amir Khan of Tonk (1806-34) as shown in the portrait published by T.H. Hendley (1897), pl. 25, No. 1.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

13. THE CELESTIAL HEMISPHERES

Jaipur, mid-18th century
Gouache, *65.5 x 120 cm.*
Private collection, Milan

Kings (as is customary among the Indians even today) used to consult stars about any important, and even less important undertaking; hence astrologers enjoyed a high esteem at court, being also good advisers in matters of State.

Auspicious signs were sought in planets especially on the occasion of births, weddings and even to determine the day and time of an important hunt.

Availing themselves also of Western experience in the field of astronomy, Indians developed astrology in a remarkable way, and to this very day astrologers are highly thought of because of the complexity and accuracy of their responses. The representation of the celestial hemispheres shown here, known as equidistant conical polar, undoubtedly draws its inspiration from Western maps of the sky. It reproduces classical Ptolemaic constellations, particularly those of the Zodiac and some introduced in the 16th and 18th centuries. The presence of the Reindeer and Taurus of Poniatowski in the northern hemisphere, the latter being introduced in 1777, marks a *terminus ante quem* of the miniature. On the contrary, the important constellations of Lacaille of 1755, appearing also in Bode's famous atlas of 1801, are altogether missing; that shows either a date of the miniature preceding such atlas, or a deliberate decision by the artist not to reproduce them because of the novelty of the subjects being represented. At any rate, from a stylistic viewpoint, this miniature can be dated to the end of the 18th century. In comparison with Western atlases, the Indian artist introduced a few variations: for example he changed the two lions into tigers, the giraffe (Camelopardalis) into a dromedary, while adding an utterly new constellation to the southern hemisphere, namely a sword with a characteristic Rajput shape.

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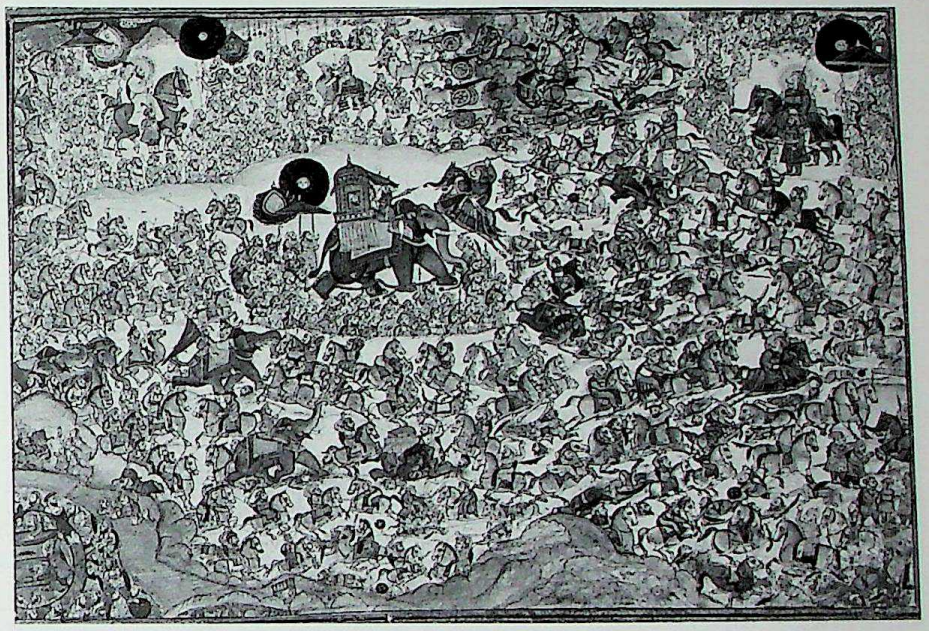


14. THE BATTLE OF HALDIGHATI (1576)

Devgarh or Udaipur, 1810-20. Attributed to Chokha
Gouache, *31 x 21.5 cm.*
Royal Asiatic Society, London, RAS loan 26

This miniature depicts the battle of Haldighati, which was the last extreme resistance of the Sisodias against the advance of the Moghuls put up by the great Rāṇā Pratap Singh, who opposed Akbar's armies led by the Rājā Man Singh of Amber.

Various scenes are depicted where the Mahārāṇā appears, recognizable from his long moustache and halo around his head, surrounded by his soldiers and by royal emblems, such as the parasol (*chat'rī*) and insignia depicting the sun, the symbol of his family.

In the top right corner the Mahārāṇā, with an armour and a long spear, proceeds towards the battle riding his horse, which is also harnessed for the battle, with a broad caparison and a long trunk on its muzzle, allowing it to approach elephants without too much danger. His opponent leads the fight in the distance, surrounded by his men, and seems to be giving orders to a commanding officer riding a dromedary, turning towards his own men; guns drawn by oxen fire at the enemy cavalry.

In the central section of the miniature the battle rages; in the middle the Mahārāṇā dashes at the enemy general, whose head scarcely appears from the palanquin with a dome placed on the elephant; but he does not succeed in spearing Man Singh and kills the *marut* on the elephant instead. On this occasion his horse, Chetak by name, will be wounded by a knife held in the beast's trunk. In the bottom left corner the artist possibly depicted the death of his faithful horse, which became a symbol of self-denial and faithfulness because, however wounded, it managed to bring its master to safety. Then a few women receive the king and help him to cross a river; upon entering the enemy camp, he kills a sleeping foe; this episode, unknown to Tod and modern historians, is possibly drawn from some local legend.

A similar version of the battle, of a large size, is in the collection of the present Mahārāṇā of Udaipur, while another belongs to the Rāvat of Devgarh.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

15. THE MAHĀRĀO CHATTAR SAL OF BUNDI (1631-1659) ON HORSEBACK WEARING AN ARMOUR

Bundi, c. 1800
Gouache, *25.5 x 17 cm.; 32 x 22 cm. with border*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 560 - 1592

W.G. Archer (1959), fig. 29

Chattar Sal, a faithful ally of the Moghul emperor, Shah Jahan, held prestigious positions at the imperial court and, therefore, spent most of his time far from his state. Even though such circumstances may have hardly fostered the development of arts, nevertheless, some paintings show the presence of a few Moghul masters at Bundi.

The miniature portrays the king – whose name is indicated by the inscription on the back (cf. Appendix) – dressed for battle with a long spear, riding a horse also harnessed for the battle, wearing a caparison and a mask on the muzzle ending with a short trunk which, as mentioned above, helped to approach elephants.

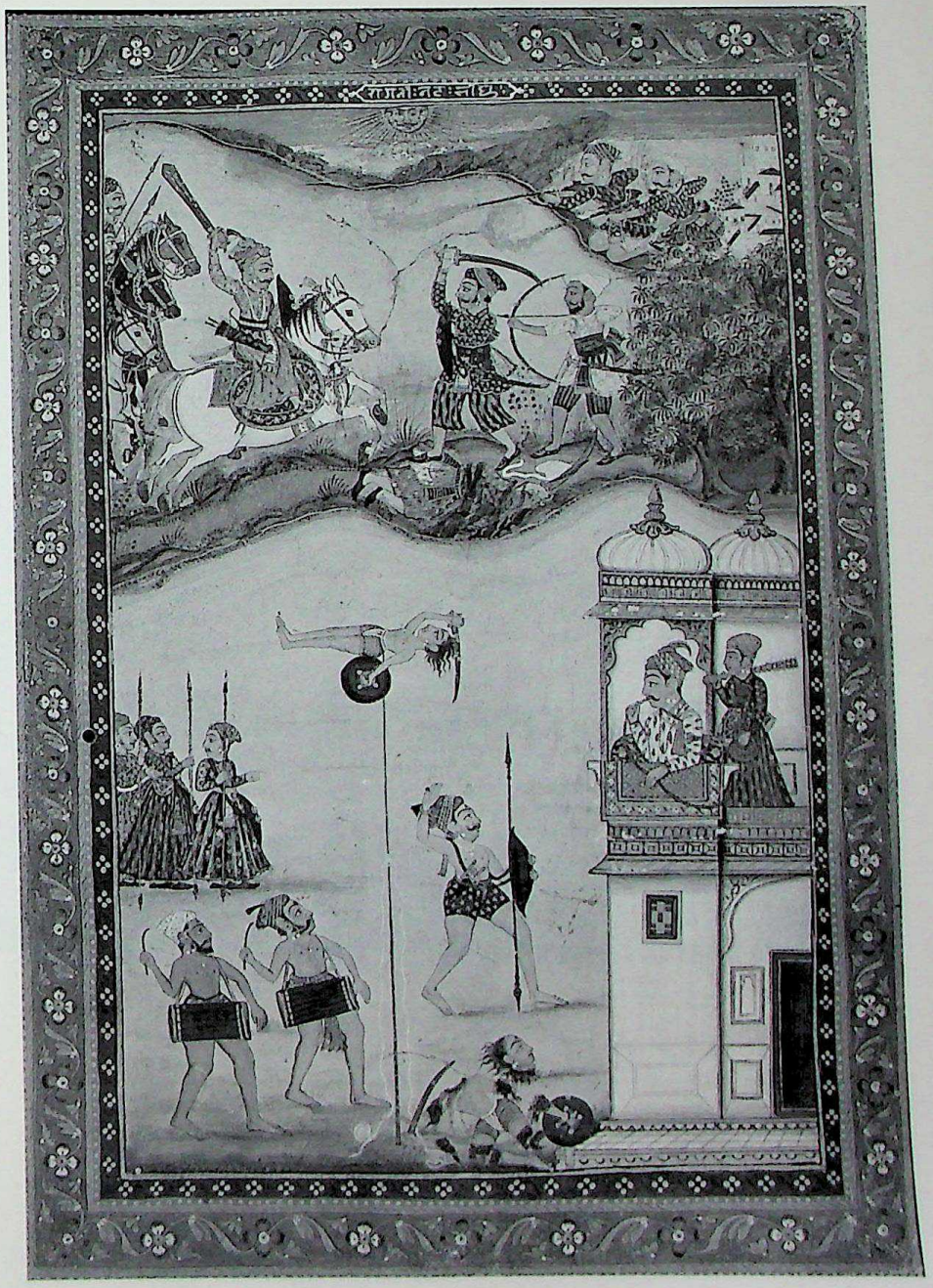
Six attendants on foot carry the insignia of power: two *caurīs*, a crown, a royal emblem, a white cloth (*rūmāl*) used to drive away the insects, while another carries a bow with arrows. Their garments, including a short tunic worn on tight trousers and a small turban, is in the Moghul fashion. In the background there is a pale-yellow and green hillock with a few trees; two birds fly in the overcast sky.

A horse with a similar caparison is to be found in P. Chandra (1956), 57, Nos. 3-4, fig. 4.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

16. NATA RĀGIṆĪ

North-western Rajasthan, mid-18th century
Gouache, *33 x 23 cm.*
Private collection, Milan



As stated in the inscription placed at the top, this miniature depicts the *Rāganiḥ nāṭa sīdhu*, by which one wants to express the wish of love conquest to be achieved through tests of bravery and dexterity.

A war scene is depicted above: in a hilly landscape, on the banks of a river, a horseman with his escort dashes brandishing his sword at a standing enemy, also ready to strike back with his sword, while, behind him, another warrior is about to shoot an arrow and two more take kneeling postures to fire their rifles at the assailants.

In the foreground possibly the same figure appearing on horseback in the top section is seen sitting in the verandah of a palace, surmounted by two onion-shaped domes; he is smoking a water-pipe held by a servant also carrying a *mur'chal* and is watching what appears to be an acrobatic-conjuror show; a man keeps his balance on the top of a long pole, then is seen torn to pieces on the ground; the scene is also witnessed by two drummers; a few noblemen, wearing shields and long swords, are approaching the palace.

This *rāga* is usually depicted with a scene of fight, while acrobatics or athletic shows are more seldom depicted (cf. the Lucknow Rāgamālā series [c. 1780-82] published by T. Falk and A. Archer [1981], No. 351, XXXV, p. 462). Both scenes are exceptionally depicted in this miniature.

The fight between horsemen conjures up the heroic and martial spirit of this *rāga*, meaning to express bravery, energy and physical strength also through physical exercises. It is interpreted during the hot season, at the end of the day or at night-time.

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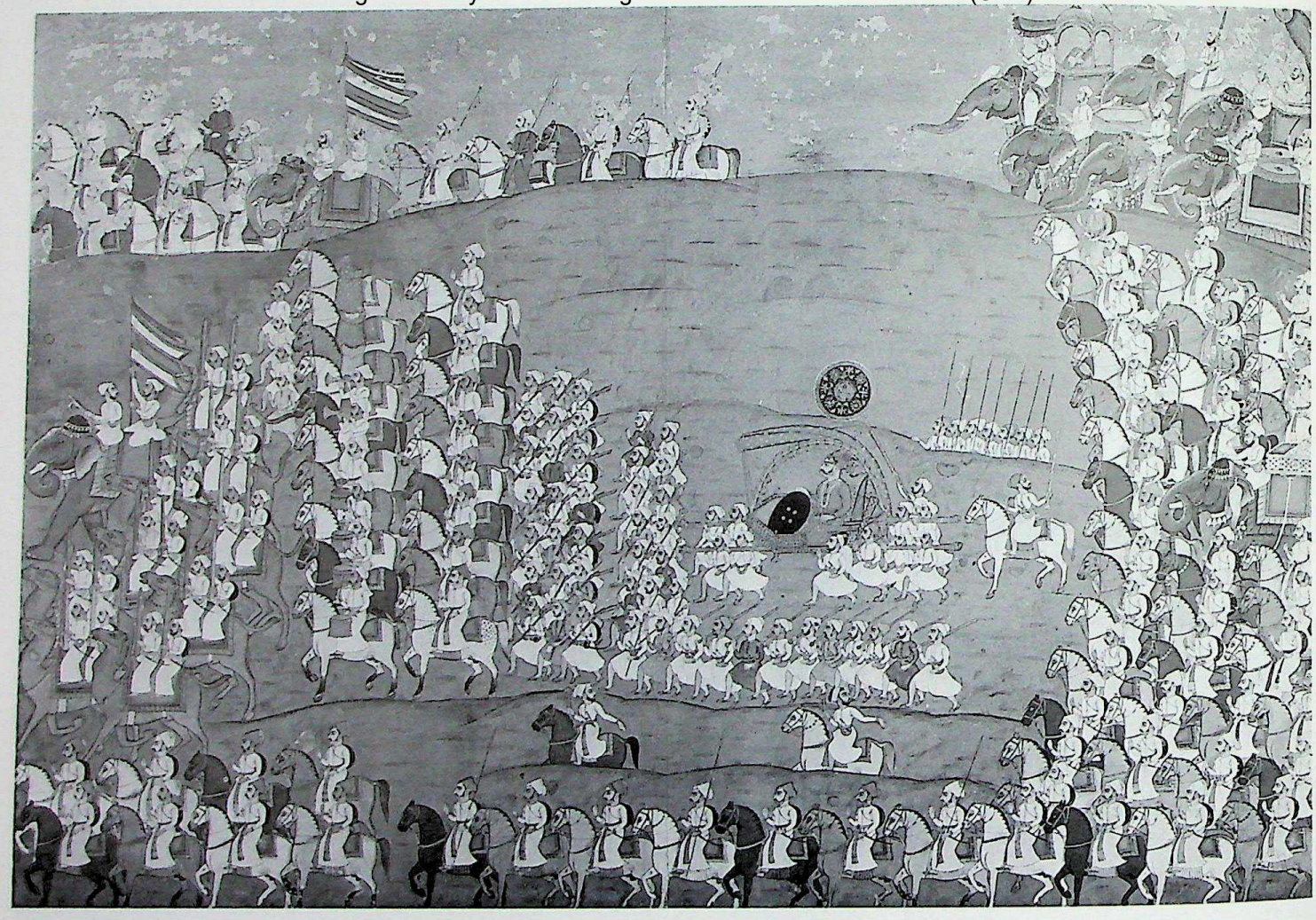


17. ROYAL PROCESSION

Marwar, mid-18th century
Gouache, *42.5 x 62 cm.*
Private collection, Milan

A king, perhaps identifiable as Bakht Singh of Jodhpur (1751-53) (T.H. Hendley [1897], pl. 17, No. 25; cf. also the Introduction) takes part in a great procession, sitting on a palanquin, together with his attendants and soldiers preceding and following him with flags and insignia; many ride horses, elephants or camels, whereas others proceed on foot in an orderly manner, carrying long spears.

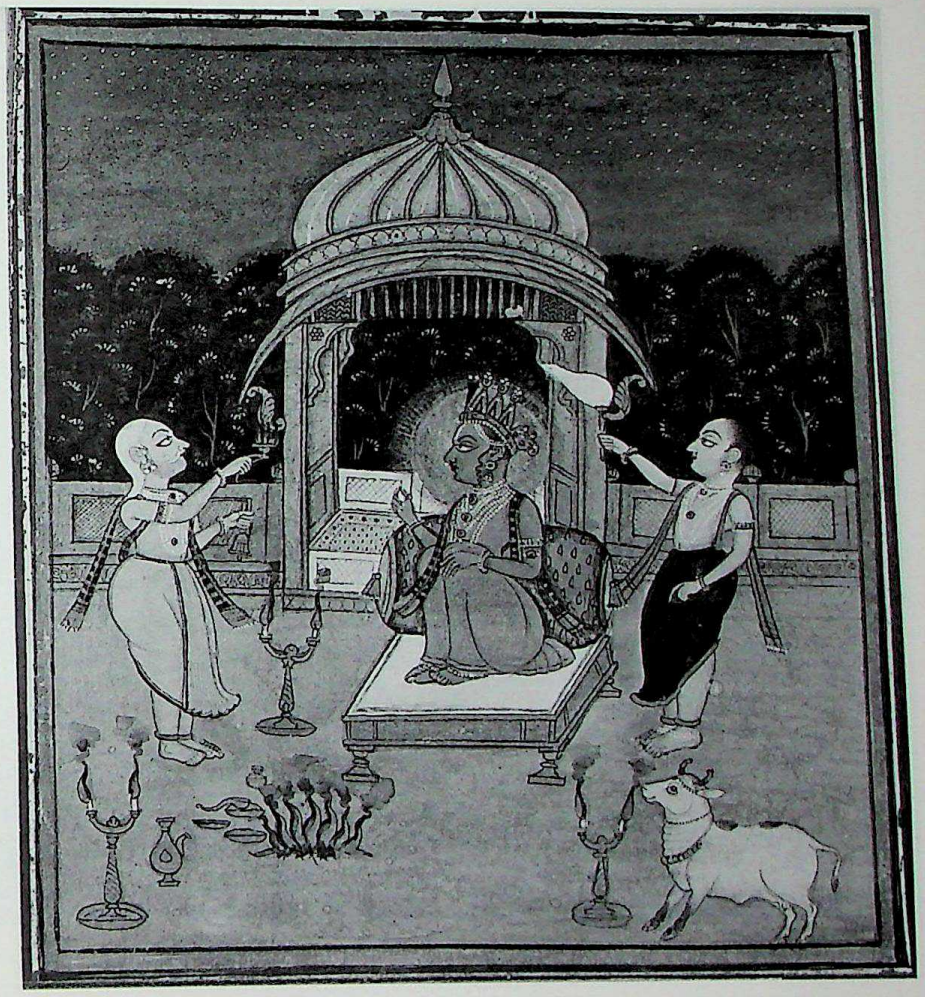
The royal elephant, carrying an ornate palanquin surmounted by two little domes, follows the train; also the three horses without riders, led by attendants by their bridles, are likely to be reserved for the king.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

18. MALAVAKAUŚA RĀGA

Bikaner, late 18th century
Gouache, *11.1 x 10 cm*
Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, MIK I 5514

E. and R.L. Waldschmidt (1975), II, pp. 108-109, fig. 17.

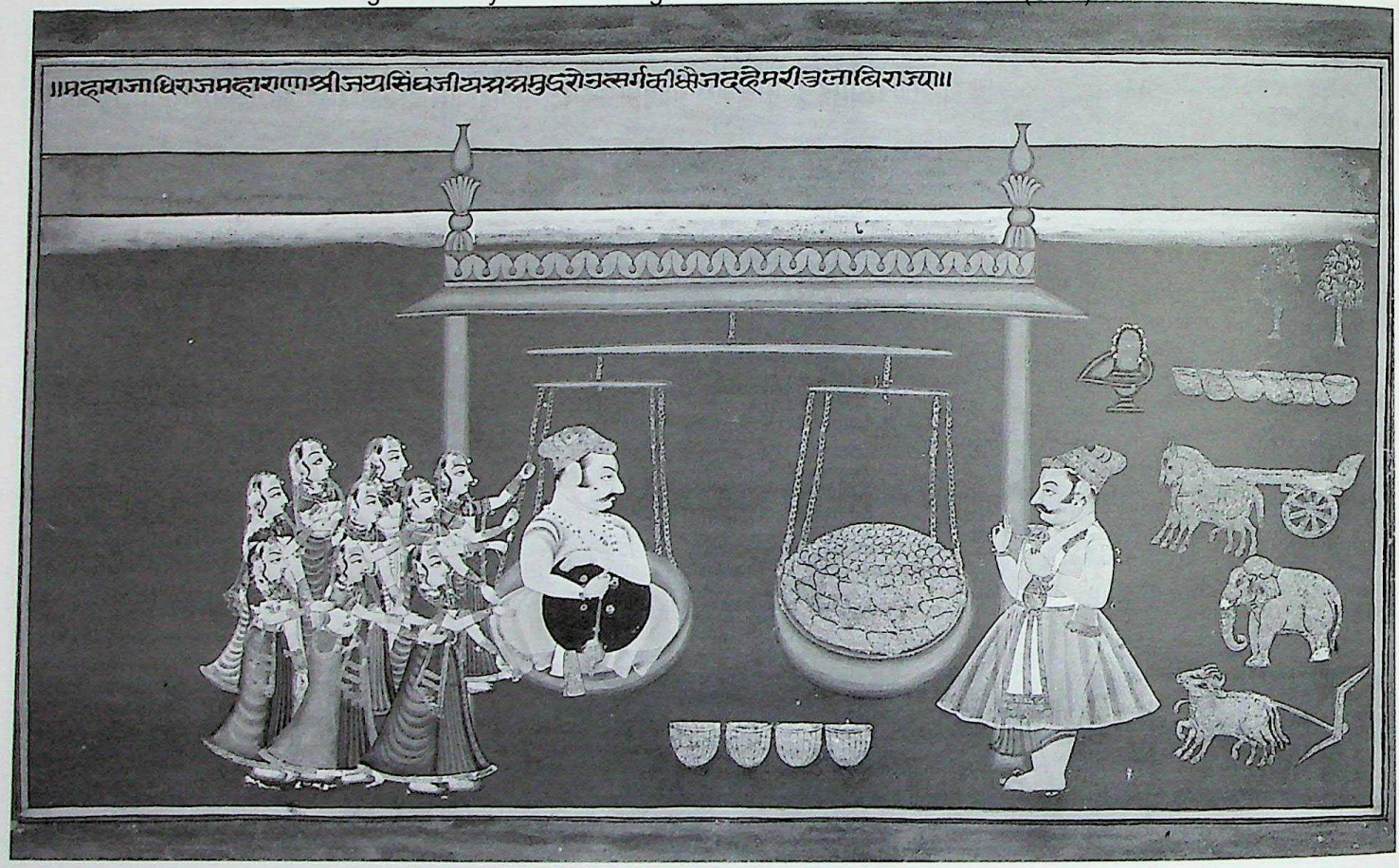


At night, beneath a starry sky, on a terrace facing the forest a priest is performing some rites in front of the king. The latter, of a blue colour like Kṛṣṇa – *rājās* often liked being portrayed in the likeness of the god – with a halo around his head and adorned by a five-pronged jewelled crown, is seated on a simple throne, his back leaning against a cylindrical bolster; like the other two figures in the picture, he wears a *dhotī*, used especially on the occasion of religious ceremonies, and is bedecked with many a jewel. The priest, with white hair and curled moustache, is performing propitiation rites, waving an oil lamp in front of the king, while his other hand swings a bell. An attendant fans the king with a *caurī* from behind. A sacrificial fire, with seven flames, is burning in front of the throne; a few ritual vases and three two-armed candle-sticks are placed on the floor next to it; a cow on a smaller scale is on the right.

The pretty pavilion on one side of the terrace has an onion-shaped dome, a sloping roof, the floor raised above the terrace level and covered with a decorated carpet; a striped curtain is rolled up beneath the roof.

The name of the *rāga* is indicated on the back of the miniature (cf. Appendix); it is meant to emphasize the notion of kingship; furthermore, the likeness of the king with Kṛṣṇa reveals his divine status.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)



19. THE MAHĀRĀṆĀ JAI SINGH (1680-1698) BEING WEIGHED AT DHEBAR

Mewar, 1810-20
Gouache, *22 x 40 cm.; 25.5 x 43.2 cm. with border*
Royal Asiatic Society, London,
RAS Loan 38

R. Skelton (1959), pl. III, pp. 10-11

As stated in the inscription, this miniature depicts an important ceremony which was performed on the occasion of the end of the works for the creation of the Jaisamand reservoir, thus named after his builder: « The Mahārājā Jai Singh on the completion of the reservoir, while sitting on gold scales » (cf. Appendix).

Jai Singh sits on a large scale while on the other scale bags full of gold to be given for charity have been placed as a counterweight to his person. Wicker baskets containing more gold lie in the foreground, whereas more bags full of coins, a cart drawn by horses, an elephant and a plough drawn by oxen, also in gold, appear on the right. Above, a small *liṅgam* rests on a *yoni*-shaped pedestal. A minister, dressed in garments in the Moghul fashion, presides the ceremony, holding a gold jug in his hand. Several maids form a circle behind the king.

The ceremony depicted here, known as *tulādān*, was performed in India on the occasion of important events, such as the coronation of a king, or else during his visits to holy places, such as, for instance, Lake Pushkar (cf. Introduction).

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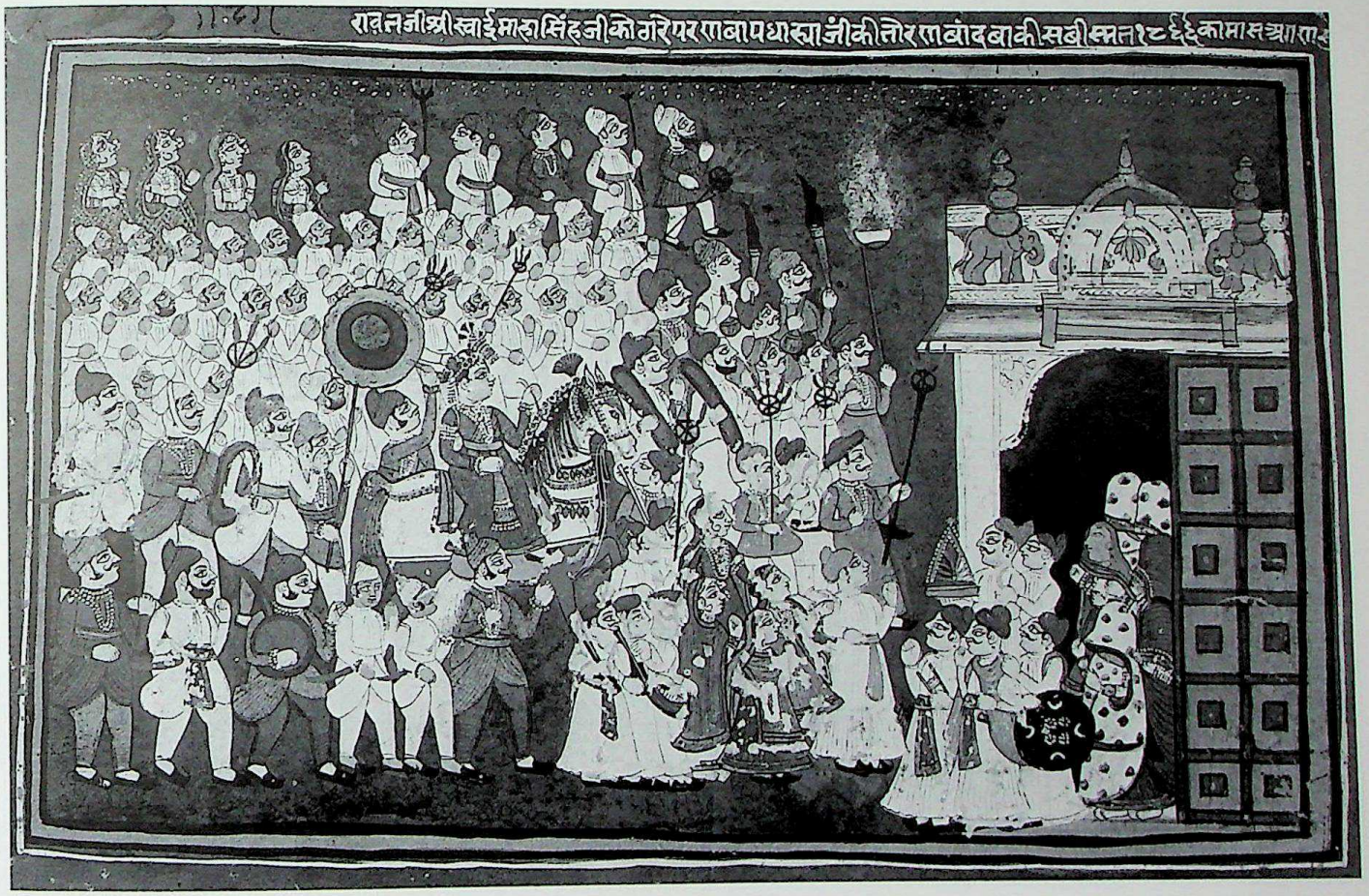

20. ŚRĪ SAVĀĪ MAHA SINGH JĪ RETURNING TO HIS PALACE

Ṭhikānā of Begun (Mewar), 1809
Gouache, *20 x 38 cm.; 29 x 49 cm. with border*
Private collection, Ludwigshafen

The inscription appearing on the upper border (cf. Appendix) tells us that the Ravat Śrī Savāī Maha Singh jī is returning to his palace on a starry night of the year (*saṃvat*) 1866 (A.D. 1809), possibly after taking part in a festival or in religious rituals; he is preceded and followed by a large crowd of dignitaries, women, attendants and servants, some of whom shed light with long torches; at the front of the procession one may recognize a few musicians and four women, possibly dancers, who used to follow the *rājā* during his outings; the king's horse is richly harnessed and its legs are possibly painted red (cf. fig. 61); behind it there is a round royal emblem. A few dignitaries and three veiled women are waiting for him at the palace entrance.

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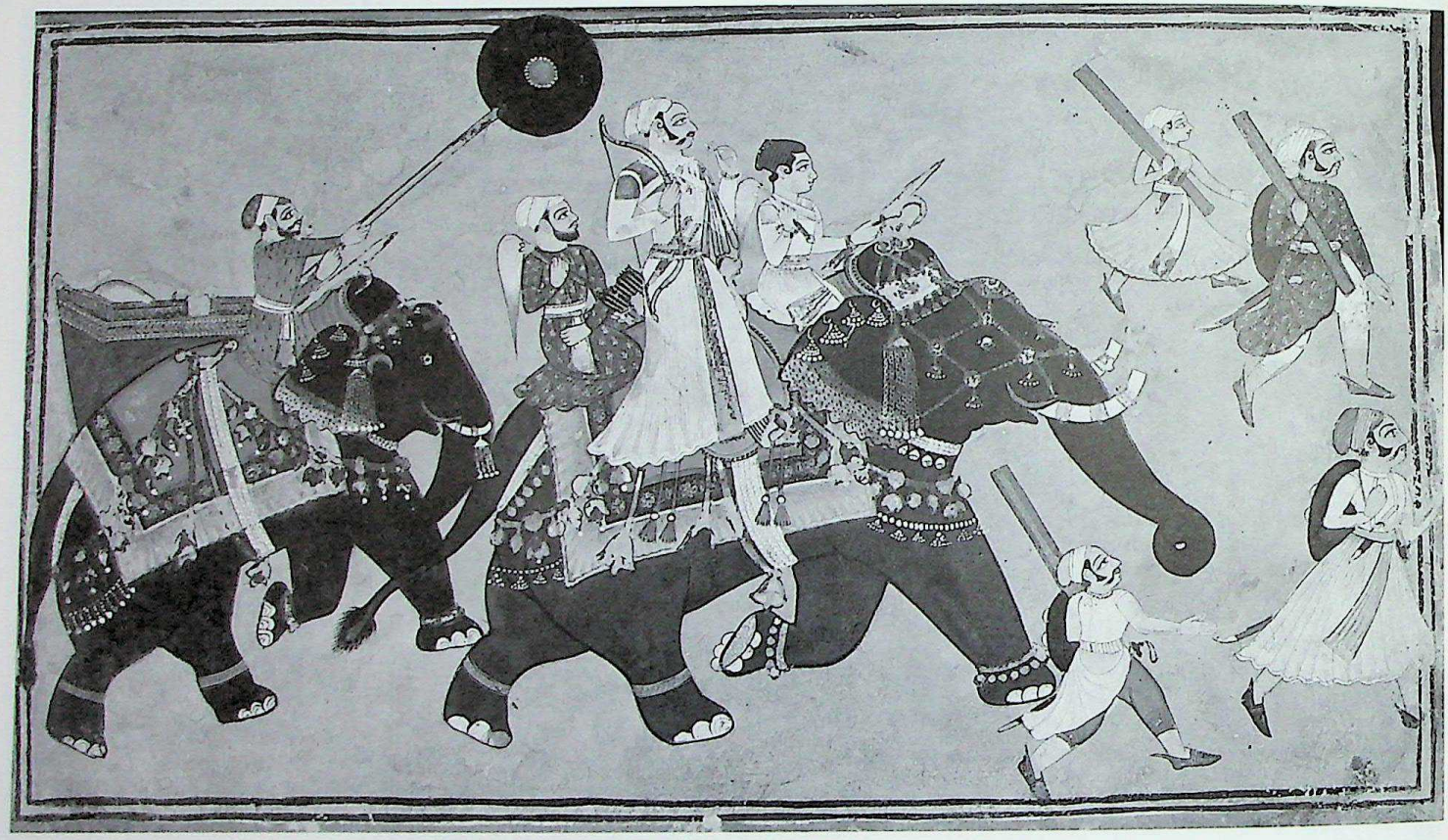

21. NOBLEMAN WITH RETINUE

Uniara (Bundi), c. 1750
Gouache, *21 x 37.5 cm.*
Private collection, London

A nobleman, possibly the lord of a *ṭhikānā* (a type of semi-feudal estate), carrying a bow on his shoulder, goes hunting or to some important meeting riding a huge elephant with rich trappings; on the same animal there are its driver, holding a goad (*aṅkuśa*), and a servant, both carrying a *caurī*. There follows an elephant of smaller proportions, whose driver holds an emblem of power above the nobleman. Four attendants, three of them carrying shields and a few weapons – possibly rifles – wrapped in their cases, precede the train.

The extant inscription reads: *Rāwat jī Śrī a...*

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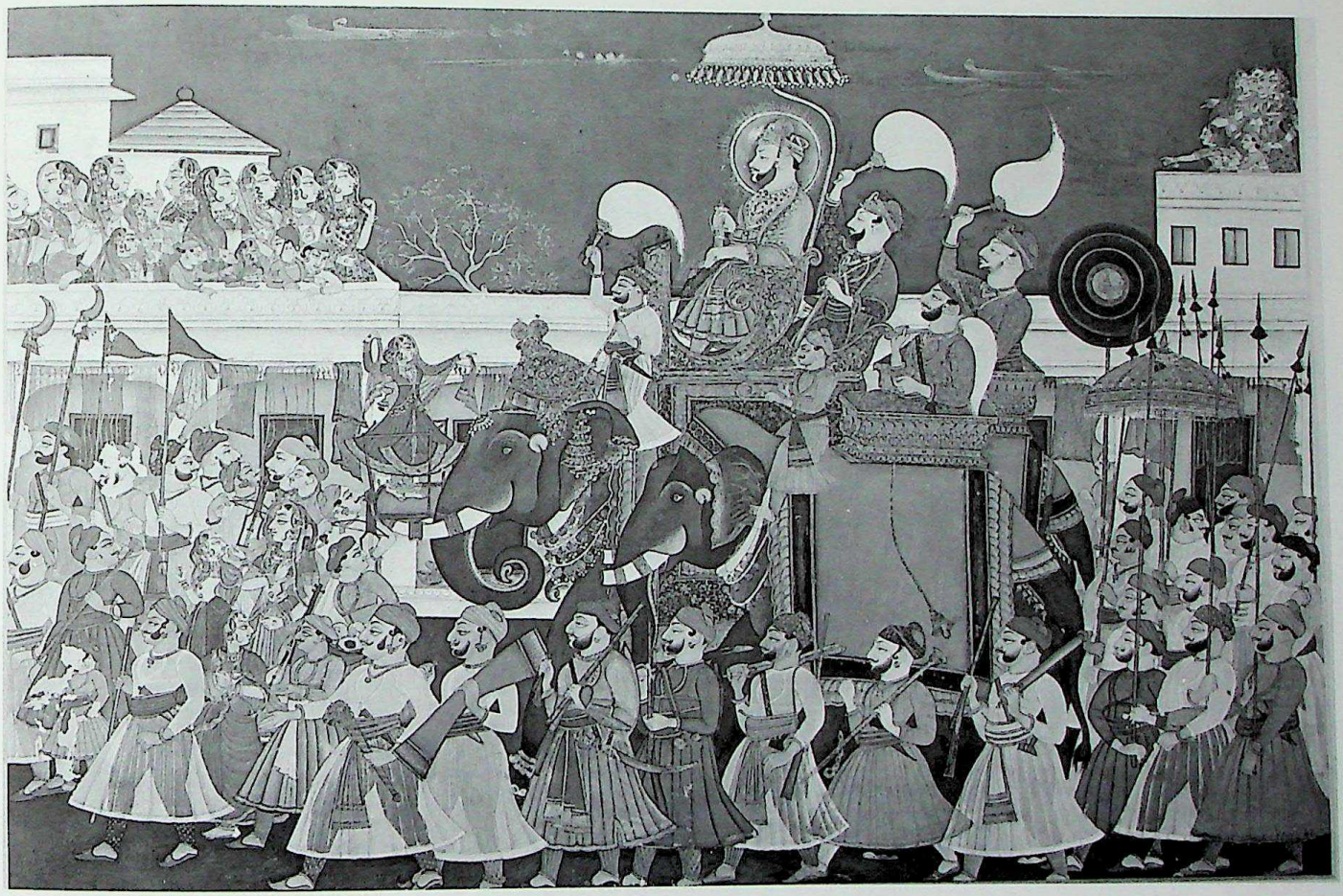

22. THE MAHĀRĀO RAM SINGH II OF KOTAH (1827-1865?) IN PROCESSION

Kotah, c. 1850
Gouache, *32 x 48.5 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS 564 - 1952

W.G. Archer (1959), fig. 48, p. 56;
A. Topsfield (1984), fig. 30;
C. Allen (1984), fig. p. 59

The miniature depicts a solemn royal procession going through the town streets.

The king sits on a magnificent palanquin beneath an elegant parasol, placed on a big elephant covered with rich drapery and ornaments. On the same animal there are its driver and two servants fanning him with *caurīs*. A dancer (*nautch*) performs on a platform which has been fastened to the big beast's tusks. Another elephant, of a smaller size, carries the *rājā*'s son, Chattar Singh; the usual bell sounding at each step of the animal is hanging on its side; the retinue is formed by attendants, servants and soldiers carrying flags, staffs of command, royal insignia – a parasol and a circular standard –, long spears and other weapons. Several women and children appear on the balconies of the houses to greet the king; along the way the shop doors of the bazar appear adorned with coloured drapery for the occasion.

A very similar scene, having the same ruler as its protagonist, has been published in *Two Faces of South Asian Art* (1984), frontispiece; a drawing of his face is to be found in *Indian Drawing* (catalogue 1983), fig. 6. In S.C. Welch and M. C. Beach (1965), fig. 78, he is again portrayed on horseback, taking part in the festival of Divālī.

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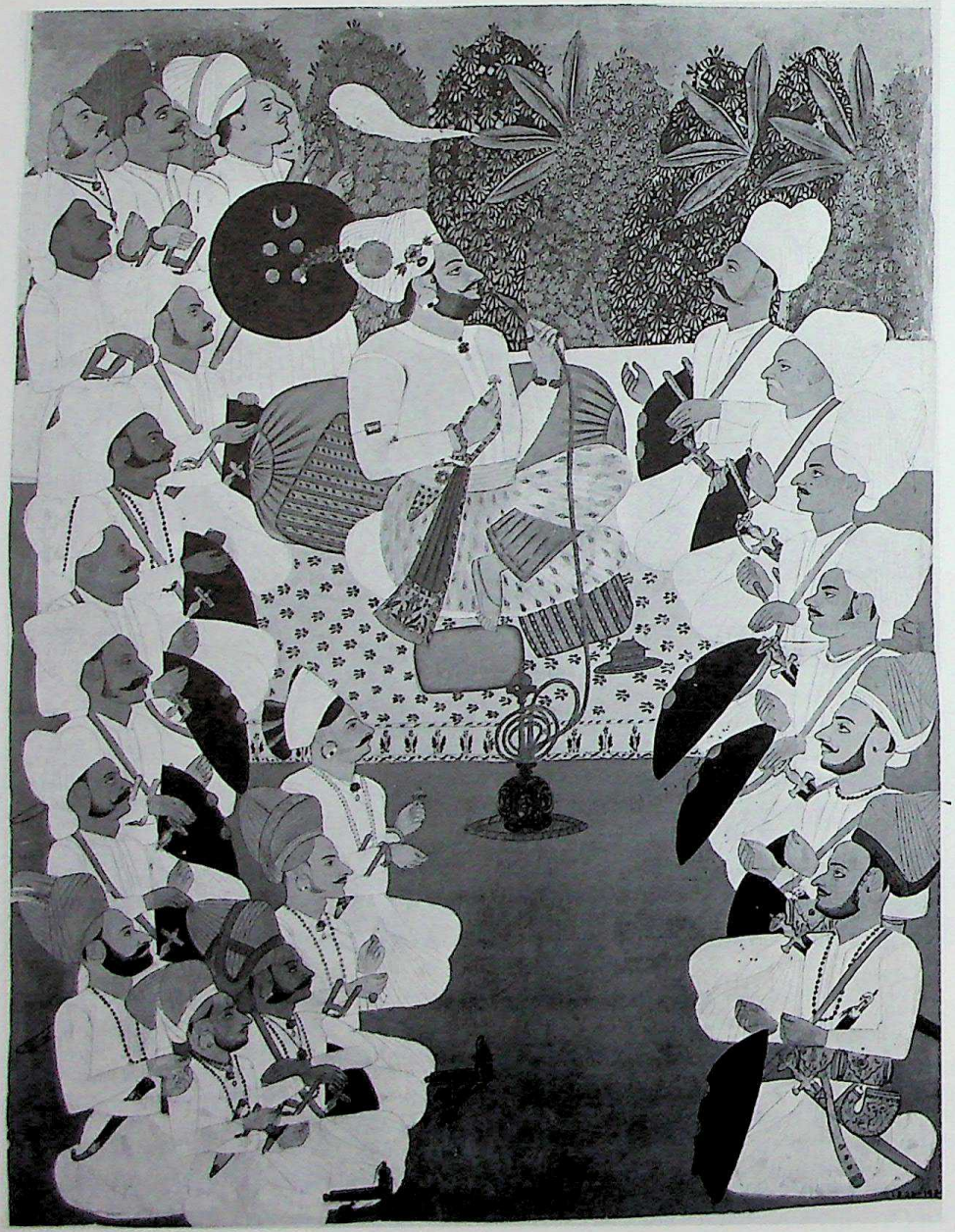

23. RĀJĀ IN DAR'BĀR

Jodhpur, c. 1795
Gouache, *40.8 x 31 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 27 - 1979

Indian Painting (catalogue 1978), fig. 30

On a terrace facing a garden with many trees, a *rājā* identified as Bhim Singh of Jodhpur (1793-1803) is sitting on cushions, on a light cotton carpet with a flower pattern (*darī*); he is holding a *ḥuqqā* in one hand and a flower in the other, possibly the gift of one of the on-lookers. He wears a shirt, and the light gown worn on the top of his trousers is tightened at the waist by a decorated sash (*paṭ'kā*), where a *kaṭār* is inserted; the big turban is decorated with jewels; he is surrounded by several noblemen bearing their shields, swords and ceremonial daggers with their elegant hilts; the figure in the foreground on the right also carries a gunpowder flask; two items, possibly writing accessories (ink-pot and penholder), lie on the floor in front of the first two figures on the left.

This simple and conventional scheme, including a king in the middle and two parallel rows of dignitaries, is common in Rajput painting; cf. A. Coomaraswamy (1916), pl. LXXVI (where an assembly of Sikhs is depicted); S. C. Welch and M. C. Beach (1965), fig. 39, and *Indian Paintings* (catalogue 1975), fig. 50.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

24. THE RĀVAT RAGHO DAS (1776-1786) IN DAR'BĀR

Devgarh, c. 1780
Gouache, *47.5 x 35.5 cm.;*
58.5 x 44 cm. with border
Private collection, Rome

Colnaghi (catalogue 1978), p. 53, fig. 58;
M.C. Beach (1970-71), pp. 23-35, figs. 6-7.

The Rāvat Ragho Das – an inscription in English bearing that name appears at the back – is sitting under a plainly fashioned canopy, smoking a water pipe and holding a child on his lap (the same ruler appears in another miniature in the catalogue edited by Colnaghi [1978], No. 57); the nobleman sitting in front of him and joining his hands as a sign of respect has been identified as the Kumvar Gopal Singh by M.C. Beach (1970-71), p. 27; next to them other princes an courtiers are seated on the sides with their shields; a servant fans them with a *mur'chal* while another is approaching carrying a tumbler. On the floor, next to the pipe, there are two small toys, a horse and an elephant with a palanquin, possibly brought as presents to the little prince.

In its skilful symmetry, this composition is enlivened by the waving movement of the little pleats of the *jāmās* of the figures. One should notice the sharp outline of the portraits of the figures.

M.C. Beach (1970-71, p. 24) ascribes this work to the artist Bakhta who, after living at Udaipur as a court painter possibly since his childhood, towards 1769 moved to Devgarh, a small *ṭhikānā* north-east of Udaipur, where he worked until 1811, following the economic and political crisis which took place during the rule of Ari Singh of Mewar. For this painter and the art of Devgarh cf.: M.C. Beach (1970-71), pp. 23-35; S. Andhare and N. Singh (1977); S. Andhare (1967), pp. 49-53. A very similar miniature was published in *Indian Paintings* (catalogue 1975), fig. 54.

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25. MEETING OF TWO RĀJĀS

Jodhpur, late 18th century
Gouache, *30.5 x 27 cm.*
Private collection, London

Two kings, sitting on cushions, smoke pipes placed on elegant trays; a few dignitaries carrying shields and swords are besides and behind them; two servants hold *mur'chals*. The scene takes place on a terrace facing a garden; a pool and a garden with trees and two peacocks appear in the background. A group of four players and dancers can be seen in the foreground on the right.

The identification of the figures is not easy: the one on the left seems to bear some likeness with the king who appears in miniature No. 23, identified as Bhim Singh of Jodhpur (1793-1803).

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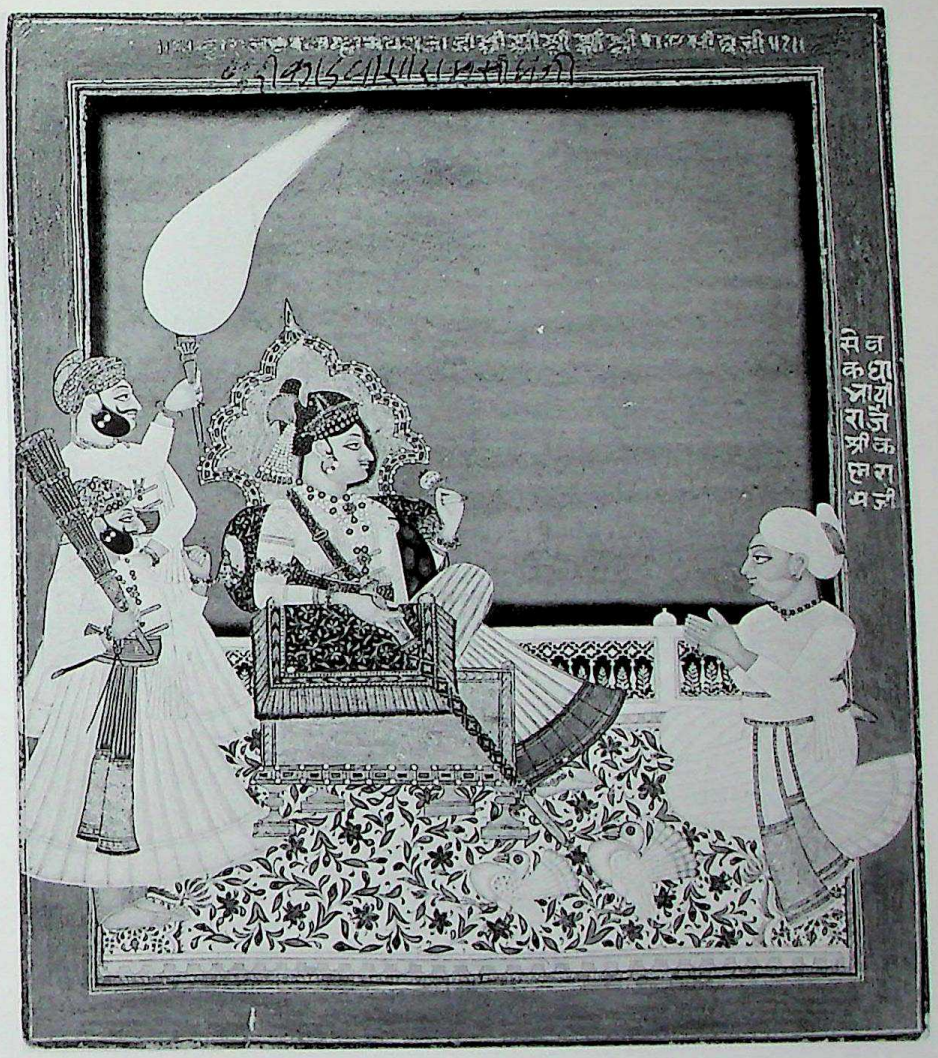
26. RĀJĀ IN AUDIENCE

Bundi, first half of the 19th century
Gouache, *29 x 20.5 cm.*
Rietberg Museum, Zürich 822



The king, identified by the inscription as Ram Singh (1821-89), sits on a terrace, on a beautifully and richly decorated throne, drawn with a threefold perspective: in fact its high back, unfolding like a fan inset with precious stones, is seen frontally, whereas its side is in profile and its arm is « flat » as if viewed from above.

The *rājā* holds a flower and a long sword in his hands; a courtier – Śrī Krishna Ram jī from the inscription – kneels at his feet, joining his hands in a gesture of greeting; behind the throne two attendants carry a *caurī* and a *mur'chal*. Two doves spread their tails on the carpet, showing a carefully drawn design with flowers and leaves.

A miniature belonging to a series, bearing similarities to this particular one, was published by M.C. Beach (1974), fig. XXXIX (the same as in W.G. Archer [1959], fig. 32); it protrays Umed Singh of Bundi with his sons.

The inscription is published in the Appendix.

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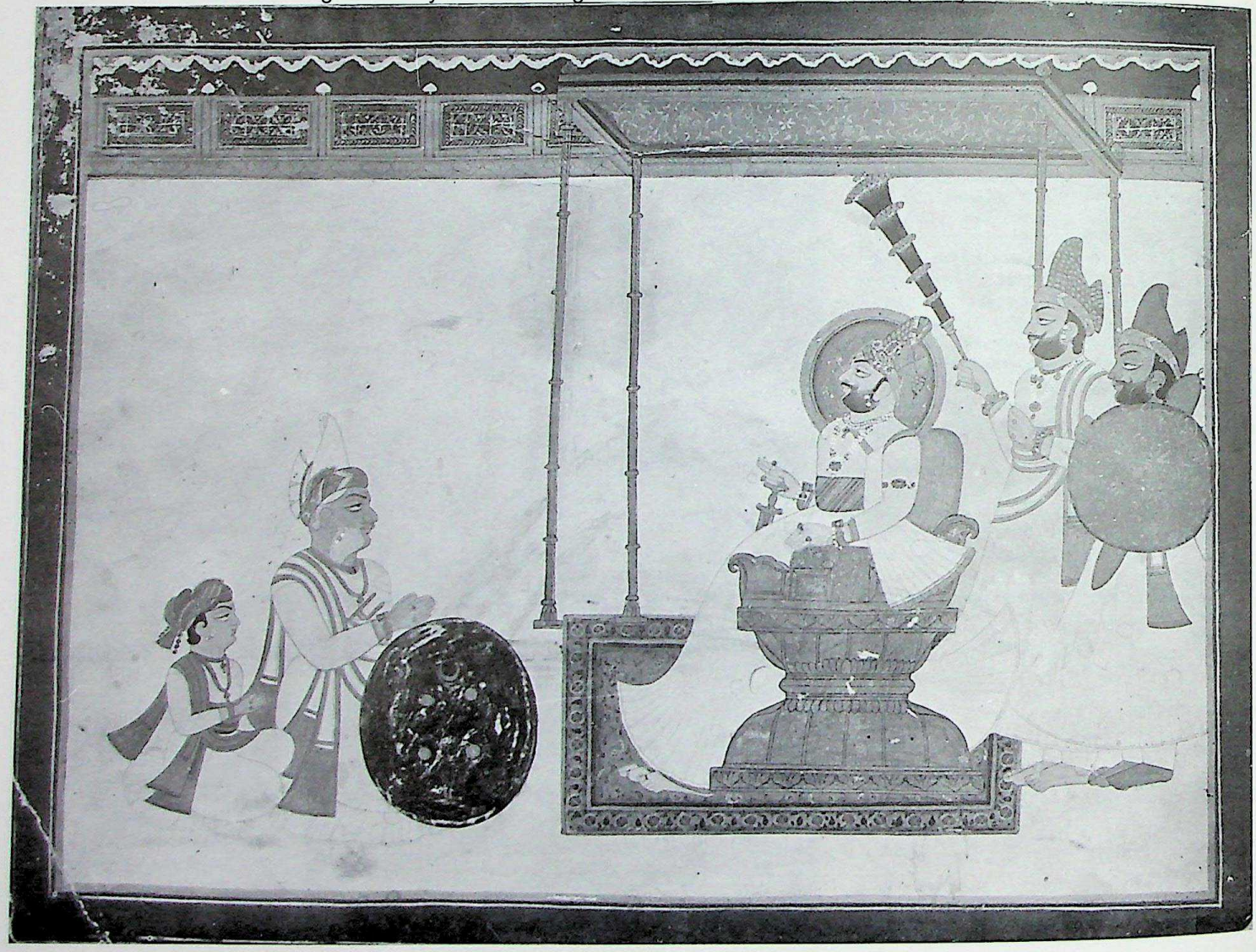

27. RĀJĀ IN AUDIENCE

Jodhpur, c. 1830
Gouache, *25.5 x 35 cm.*
Private collection, Rome

A king, identified by the inscription at the back as Man Singh II (1803-43) (cf. Appendix), with a broad halo around his head, sits on a high lotus-shaped throne underneath a simple canopy. A high dignitary, indicated as Govind Das, and a young man, possibly the *rājā*'s son – also kins were heard in audiences – kneel in front of him, their hands joined as a sign of respect and greeting. Two attendants bearing a shield and a *mur'chal* stand behind the throne.

The young prince and the king bear a close resemblance to those appearing in miniature No. 75. Cf. also fig. 72.

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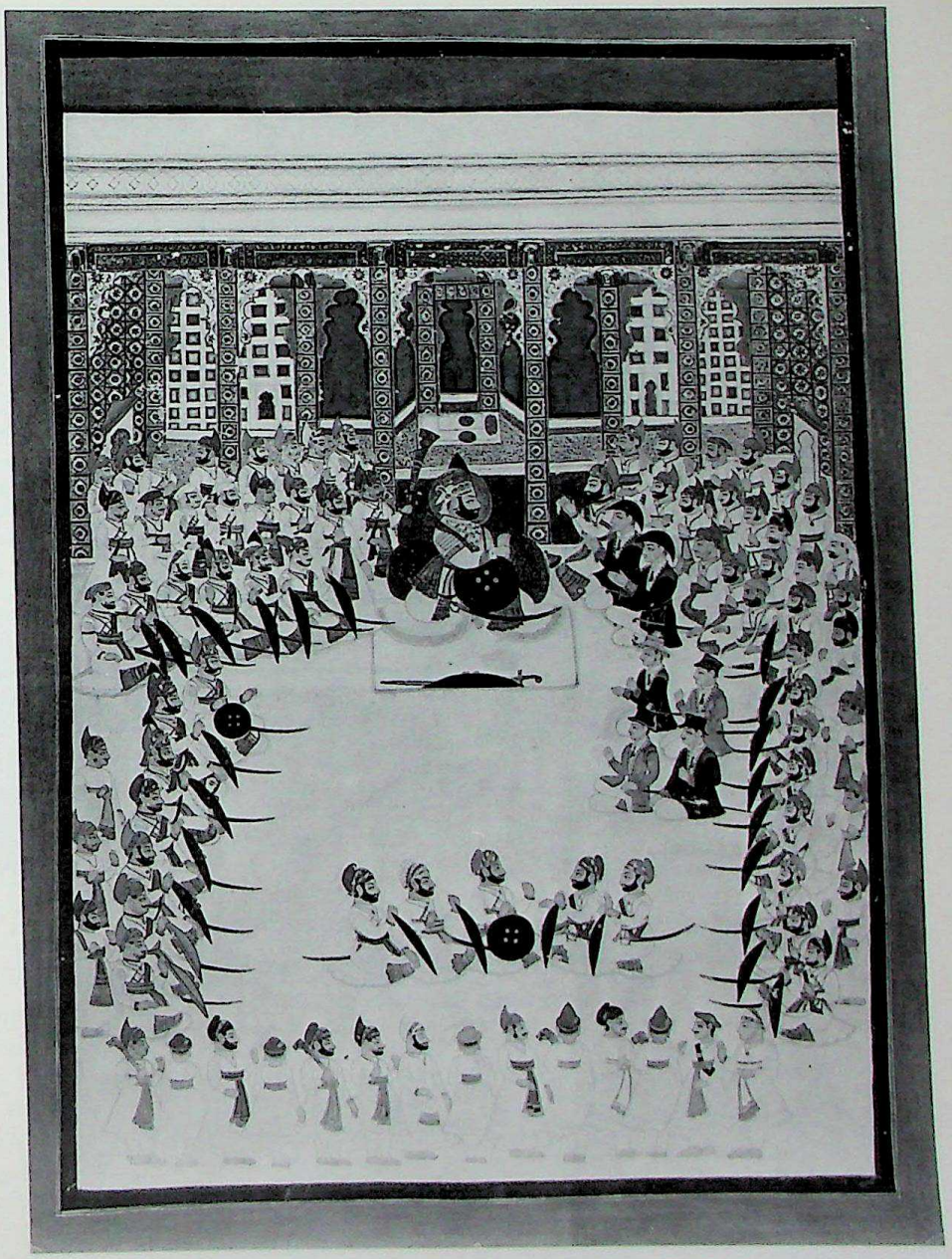
28. MAHĀRĀṆĀ JAWAN SINGH (1828-1838) RECEIVING BRITISH OFFICERS IN DURBAR

Udaipur, c. 1830. Attributed to Ghassi
Gouache, *55 x 39 cm.*
Private collection



The Mahārāṇā, with gold nimbus, sits on the royal *gaddī*, holding a sword and shield, with a second sword and shield lying before him. He faces the two leading British officers, who wear black coats with gold epaulettes and cocked hats and are shown kneeling or cross-legged while folding their hands respectfully in the Indian fashion. Four other British officers sit nearby, wearing black, orange and blue coats, within a square formed by the assembled nobles of Mewar. Attendants and mace-bearers stand in the foreground and behind the Mahārāṇā and nobles. The durbar is being held in the Bāḍī Citraśālī or « Great Picture-hall », so named after its decoration of glass inlay designs and blue and white tiles from China and elsewhere which are seen in this picture; see also A. Topsfield (1984a).

The leading British officer may be Captain Cobbe, Political Agent for Mewar from 1823 until January 1831. He was much exasperated by the behaviour of Jawan Singh, who as a prince had shown an upright and frugal character, but « immediately after his accession to the throne became involved in a round of debauchery and was almost constantly intoxicated. He seemed deaf to all representations... »: J.C. Brooke (1859), p. 35.

This painting and no. 30 are in the mature style of Ghassi, who had worked for Colonel Tod during his residence at Udaipur (1818-22) and remained active during the reign of Jawan Singh.

A.T.

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29. COLONEL JAMES TOD ON A JOURNEY

Udaipur, c. 1820. Attributed to Chokha
Gouache, *25.5 x 39.8 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 84 IM 447 - 1914

R. Skelton (1959), p. 5, fig. 1
C. Allen (1984), fig. p. 263

As mentioned in the introduction, James Tod (1782-1835) is, even today, the greatest authority for the history and culture of Rajasthan. In his monumental work *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* he gathered a remarkable amount of information regarding the traditions of the Rajput people, drawing it directly from ancient sources and annals with the help of local *pandits*, at the same time collecting stories and legends belonging to the oral tradition. He also dwells on his own experiences in Rajasthan, describing the court life of the *rājās* in particular. They received him with great honours and he often took part in feasts, banquets, religious ceremonies and beats.

In this miniature he is portrayed on an elephant, while travelling on a reconnaissance expedition in the territory of Rajasthan, accompanied by his armed escort led by two English officers: Colonel Waugh and Lieutenant Carey, both riding at the head of the train along with the physician, Dr. Duncan. He also carries along a folded palanquin, which will enable him to reach more inaccessible places, while travelling.

This miniature is ascribed to Chokha, the son of Bakhta (cf. miniature No. 14); he possibly completed his artistic training at Devgarh, his father's place of residence, but for many years he also worked at Udaipur between 1799 and 1824 (the bibliography of this artist has been published by A. Topsfield [1980], p. 139).

The incription is reported in the Appendix.

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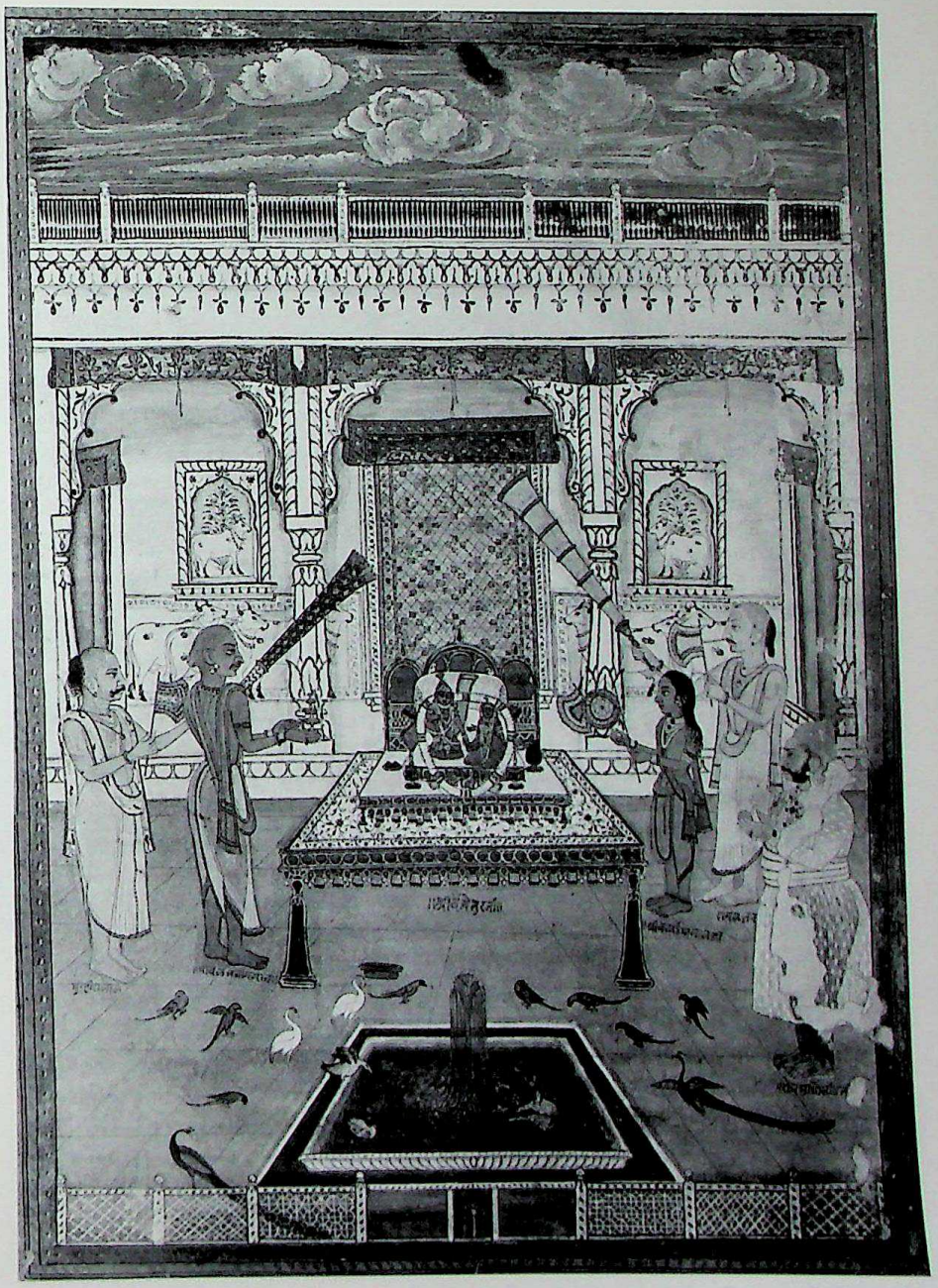
30. RELIGIOUS DEVOTIONS

Kishangarh (or Jaipur), late 18th century
Gouache, *26 x 18.7 cm.; 30.5 x 22 cm. with border*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
94 IS 157 - 1955



In a shrine dedicated to Kṛṣṇa and to his consort Rādhā, the king, identified, thanks to the inscription, as the Raja Madho Singh of Jaipur (1751-68), attends to his religious duties, helped by four brahmans, whose names are mentioned at the back (cf. Appendix), wearing just a *dhotī*. The second, given the honorific title of *Mahārājā*, might be identified as Vallabhācārya, the founder of an important religious sect started in the 15th century (cf. fig. 43), or else as a mere *ṭhikān'dār*. The altar of the divine couple, in the shape of a high throne, is placed in the middle of three pretty polilobe arches; a few cows, sacred to the god, walk underneath the two side arches in the background, two more animals being painted in niches; a small fountain and a few birds belonging to different species are painted in the foreground.

The style of this miniature shows a few features typical of the Kishangarh school, to which a very similar painting dated to 1780-90 at the National Museum in New Delhi, published in *In the Image of Man* (catalogue 1982), fig. 284, has been ascribed.

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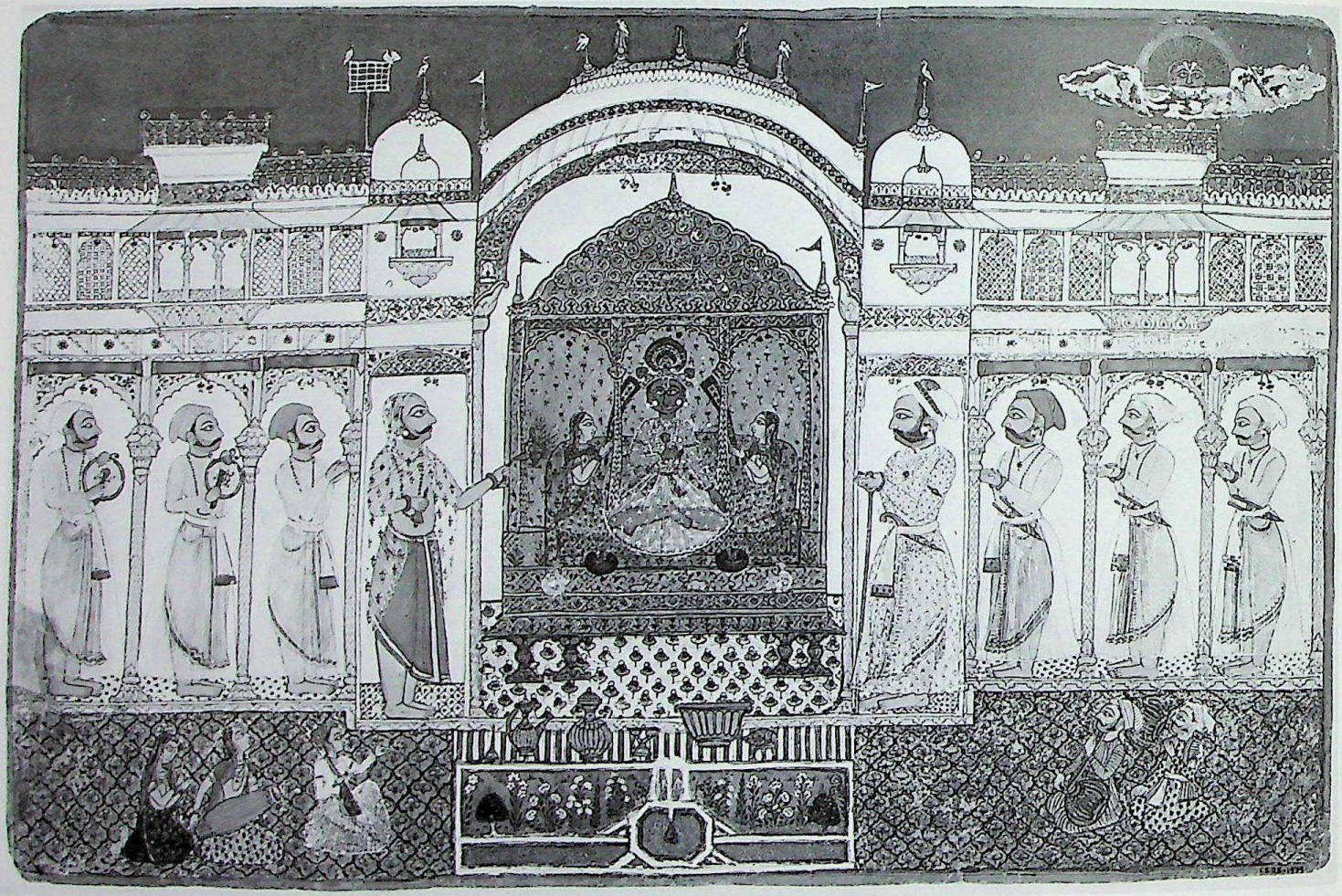

31. THE MORNING PŪJĀ OF THE KING

Uniara (Bundi), mid-18th century
Gouache, *28.5 x 44.5 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 25 - 1979

M.C. Beach (1974), fig. 55;
A. Tooth (1974), fig. 24.

Kṛṣṇa and his two consorts are depicted in an ornate shrine with three arches, surmounted by an elegant little dome, facing the courtyard of a royal palace; the little dome-shaped towers, the balconies with verandahs, the windows adorned with lattice-work of different designs, the hog-backed roof surmounting the central shrine make the building elegant and lively; parrots, cranes and pigeons rest high on the pinnacles.

Facing the shrine there are a small garden with a little fountain viewed as if from above and a few ritual vases; a conch-shell, a symbol of Viṣṇu of whom Kṛṣṇa is an incarnation, rests on a tripod. A human figure is framed in each of the arches of the arcade at the front: on the left there is a priest, wrapped in a thin shawl, holding an oil-lamp and a bell in his hands to call the attention of the god, followed by three attendants, two of whom carry a small gong; a king stands on the right, his hands joined and resting on an elegant staff, wearing a transparent *jāmā* on his *dhotī*, bearing a dagger in his sash, followed by three dignitaries, also joining their hands, dressed in the same way.

A few musicians, men and women, sit on a carpet at the bottom, holding their instruments.

The emphasis that the artist meant to place on the sun, with its human face, about to rise from behind a cloud, may indicate that the morning *pūjā* of a king is depicted here (cf. Introduction).

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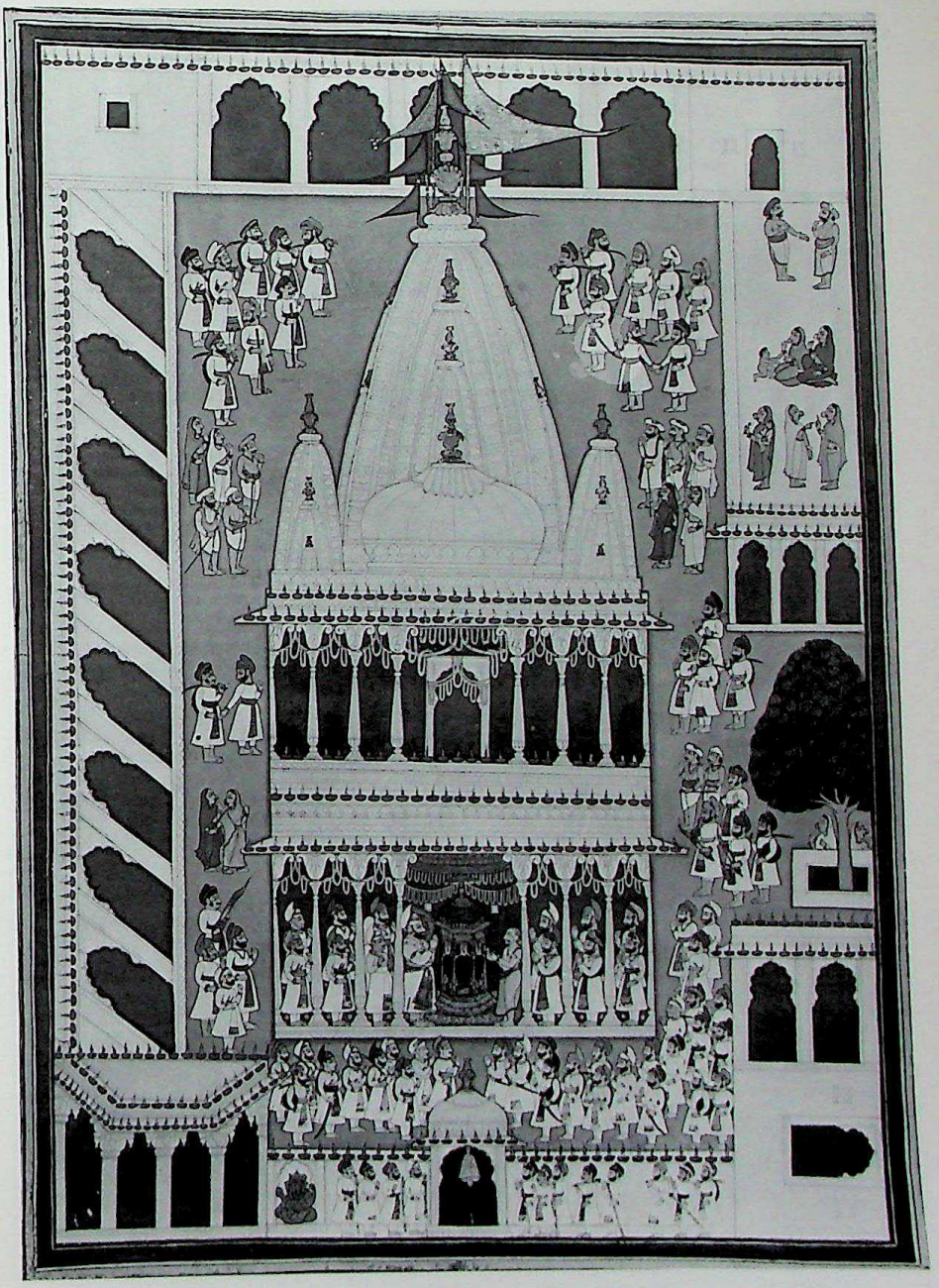
32. MAHĀRĀṆĀ JAWAN SINGH (1828-1838) WORSHIPPING AT A VIṢṆU TEMPLE DURING THE DIWALI FESTIVAL

Udaipur, 1833. Attributed to Ghassi
Gouache, *65 x 47.5 cm.*
Private collection

The Mahārāṇā, dressed in white and with a green and gold nimbus, stands respectfully with his nobles before a *chhatrī* shrine, which contains a gold *Viṣṇupada* or sacred footprint of Viṣṇu. A priest holding an *āratī* lamp stands facing him. Other nobles and attendants stand in the courtyard outside. The temple is festooned with yellow garlands and its eaves and the roofs of the surrounding buildings are lined with earthenware lamps, which are lit to celebrate the festival of Diwali in the autumn month of Kārttika. Red, silver and gold flags fly over the temple. A large gold bell hangs in its doorway, and a shrine to Gaṇeśa is set in a niche in the wall to the left.

See no. 28 for another painting which can be attributed to Ghassi.

A.T.



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33. THE MAHĀRĀO CHATTAR SAL OF KOTAH (1866-1889) GOING TO THE FESTIVAL OF TĪJ

Kotah, 1868
Gouache, *30.2 x 21.7 cm.; 34.5 x 25 cm. with border*
Staatliche Museum Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, MIK I 564 I

R. Weber (1982), pp. 307-312, fig. 56

The festival of Tīj, meaning « third », is celebrated on the third day in the month of Savan – July-August. The festival, sacred to Parvatı, celebrates her reunion with Śiva after a long period of austere mystical practices. On this occasion devotees ask the goddess to fulfil their wishes and in particular to obtain material success; a solemn procession is also made, where every one must wear something red; as a sign of good wishes the king presents the dignitaries with red clothes, and fathers do the same with their daughters. Cf. B.N. Sharma (1978), G.N. Sharma (1968), p. 168. Also Tod mentions this (I, pp. 461-462).

As mentioned in the inscription (cf. Appendix), the king (the same as in fig. 36) goes on horseback to the festival of Tīj, in the year (*saṃvat*) 1925 (A.D. 1868), accompanied by three attendants carrying the emblems of power, the *chat'rī*, the *caurī* and the *mur'chal*, and by another attendant, possibly a Master of Ceremonies (*cūb'dār*), wearing a turban with a plume. The few stylized bushes along the lower border of the miniature as well as towards the horizon, and the white clouds, hardly outlined, high in the sky, are the only naturalistic features in the scene.

The horse wears very decorated and conspicuous trappings and two bulky side plumes, which are to be found also in other miniatures of a later period (cf. fig. 94).

The *rājā* wears a dark-red *jāmā*, in accordance with tradition, with decorations of silver flowers and a wide hem also in silver, girded by a sash (*paṭ'kā*) at the waist.

Though not lacking in some strength of expression, the figure is, nevertheless, static, and that is increased by the massive stoutness of the horse. The only lively and forceful note is the head of the animal, which is rendered in a very effective manner. This miniature is a clear instance of the slow artistic decline of the schools of Rajasthan during the second half of the 19th century.

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34. THE FESTIVAL OF TĪJ

Bundi, c. 1770
Gouache, *32.5 x 20.3 cm*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 552 - 1952

W.C. Archer (1958), fig. 20;
C. Allen (1984), fig. p. 261.

On the occasion of this festival (see fig. 33) in honour of the goddess Pārvatī, women carry her image on their heads in procession through the town, finally to immerse it in the water of the river. Swings also hang from trees and women swing on them as a wish of happiness. Swings are very popular in India and may be found in every house, also fulfilling the task of pleasantly relieving sultriness during the hot months.

This miniature, possibly forming part of a *Bārah'māsā* series and showing the month of Sāvan (July-August), depicts a procession of women, dressed in bright colours, escorting a small image of Pārvatī, brought by a girl on her head; some wave staffs covered in flowers, a *caurī* and a *mur'chal*; two of them swing from the branches of a tree. A couple watches the scenes of the festival from the top of a tower. Lotus flowers and a few little geese appear in the river, which is reached by some steps; the surrounding vegetation is especially lushy; cranes pause on trees waiting for a storm; in fact serpent-like lightnings flash in the sky.

A drawing illustrating this identical subject, depicting the month of Sāvan, is at the Rietberg Museum (cf. R. Skelton [1960], fig. 19, Bundi c. 1780).

A very similar miniature in the National Museum in New Delhi (Bundi 1750) was published in K. Khandalavala *et al.* (1960), p. 40, and by B.N. Sharma (1978), fig. 35, pp. 28-29.

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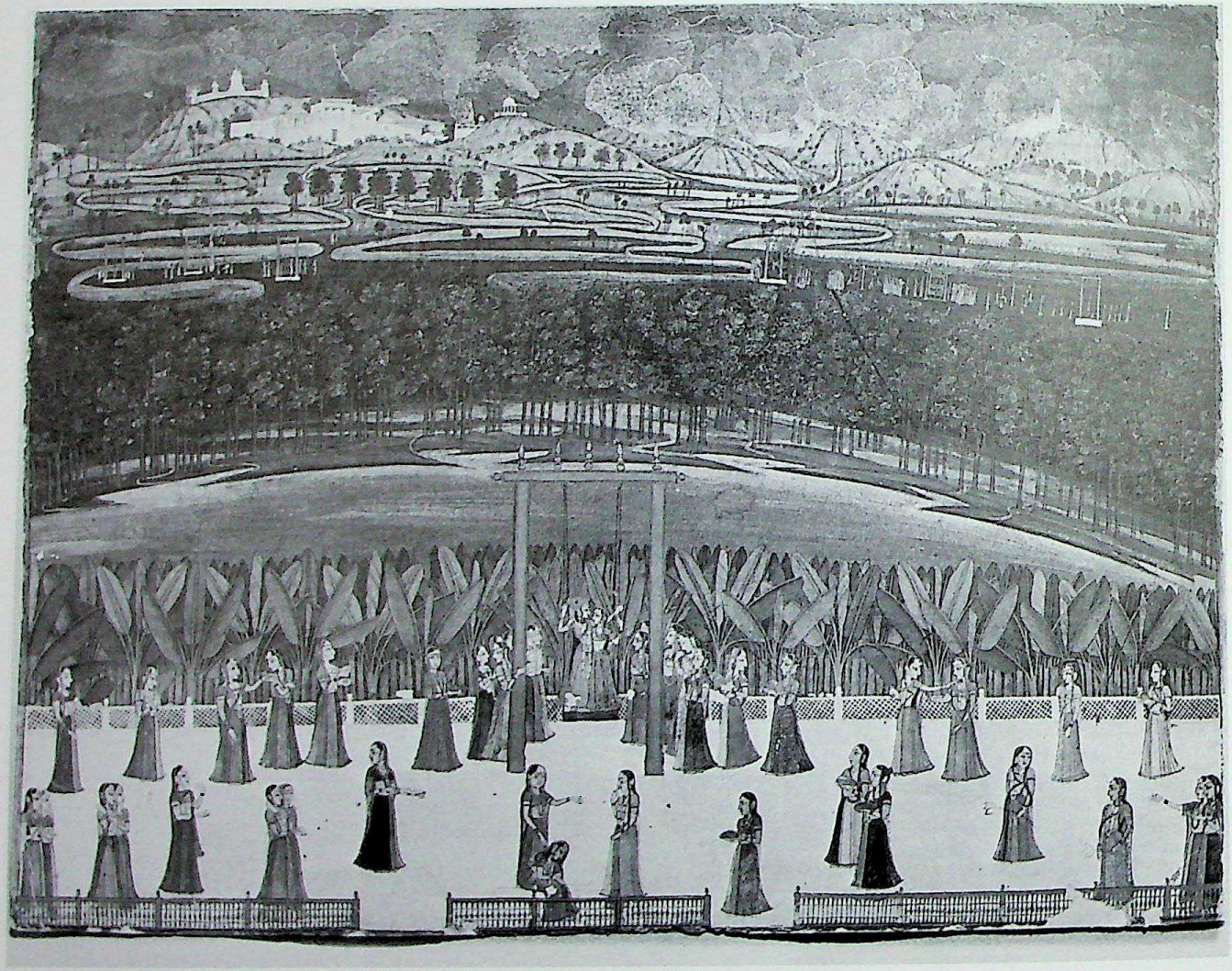

35. KṚṢṆA AND RĀDHĀ ON A SWING

Kishangarh, late 18th century
Gouache, *23 x 30 cm.*
Private collection, Rome

The divine couple stands on a swing, surrounded by a few maidens; others stroll on a large terrace facing a garden with palm-trees. A thick forest appears beyond a lake and, beyond that, swings and merry-go-rounds show that a festival is taking place. In India, on the occasion of important festivals, wandering jugglers and acrobats even today come to set up merry-go-rounds and shows, and to organize performances in the open.

The festival is difficult to identify: it might be Dol-jātrā, which is celebrated by Kṛṣṇa's followers, especially those belonging to the Vallabha sect, on the day following the plenilune in the month of Phagun, in connection with the festival of Holī.

The painting ends in the horizon with a landscape rich in streams and with some mountains where an imposing palace with white walls and two temples with high domes are depicted. Transparent clouds chequer the sky.

The scene is likely to have been painted from life, from the palace on the Lake of Kishangarh; in fact one may recognize the hills, the marshy landscape and the big palace, still existing, in the background.

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36. THE MAHĀRĀO CHATTAR SAL OF KOTAH (1866-1889) CELEBRATES THE FESTIVAL OF GANGOR

Kotah, c. 1870
Gouache, *37 x 26.2 cm.; 45 x 34 cm. with border*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 42 - 1956

W. Archer (1959), fig. 54

The king, with a halo around his head, rides a horse magnificently harnessed, following a procession of women, together with his attendants bearing garlands of flowers, food offerings and the emblems of power, namely a parasol, a fan and a round standard. As mentioned in the inscription (cf. Appendix), he celebrates the festival of Gangor and is depicted in the act of taking a wreath of flowers he has been offered by a woman; the latter's hands and feet are painted with floral designs, for on festival days women adorn themselves in this way; a maiden bears images of the king and of his consort on her head.

Behind the scene one may see large palm-leaves and other blossoming trees, and, beyond those, a river where an elegant empty boat is waiting for the train to continue the procession on the water; on the right there is a shrine of Gaṇeśa, and some hillocks and the walls of a city appear in the background. Stylized clouds chequer the sky.

The festival, dedicated to the consort of Mahādeva (Śiva), is celebrated particularly by women asking her for protection for their families and crops. The procession taking place in her honour at Udaipur, as decribed by Colonel Ṭod (I, p. 454 ff.), is especially spectacular.

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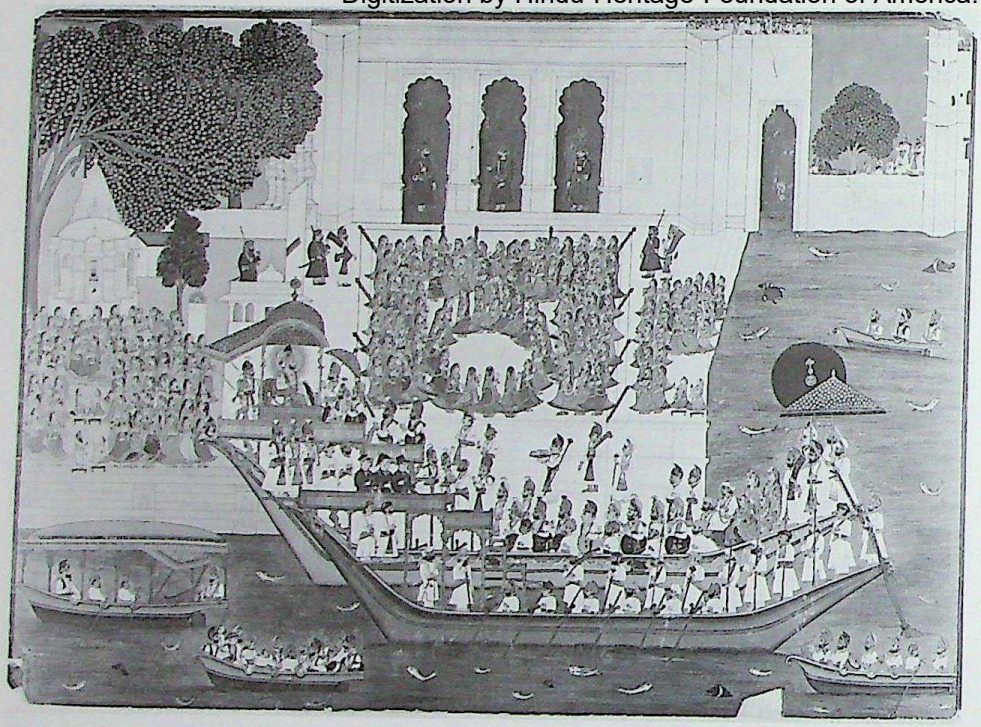

37. MAHĀRĀṆĀ SARUP SINGH (1842-1861) AND BRITISH OFFICERS BOATING ON THE PICHOLA LAKE AT THE GANGGAUR FESTIVAL

Udaipur, c. 1845-50. Attributed to Tara.
Gouache, *47 x 65 cm.*
Private collection

The Mahārāṇā, with green and gold nimbus, sits under a *chhatrī*-shaped canopy in the prow of the royal barge, faced by his seated nobles, ministers and concubines and attendants holding the Mewar regalia. The sides of the blue and green barge are decorated with a line of painted fish and turtles. In the adjacent, plainer barge the British Political Agent and two of his officers are seated. The Agent, wearing a cocked hat, may be Colonel Robinson (Mewar Political Agent, 1839-50), who visited Udaipur in the winter months of 1844-45 to have talks with the Mahārāṇā about the disaffection among his nobles and the inefficient administration of the Mewar revenues: J.C. Brooke (1859), p. 46.

The Mahārāṇā is here showing hospitality to his guests at the New Year festival of Ganggaur in the spring month of *Chaitra*, when the women of the town honoured Gaurī, the beneficent goddess of abundance. Ganggaur was considered the principal women's festival of the year, while Dassehra (see nos. 39, 40) was for the Rajput men. It was celebrated with greater splendour at Udaipur than elsewhere in Rajasthan, and was so popular that a second Ganggaur, held slightly later, was instituted there: see Tod (1920), II, pp. 665-68; Shyamaldas (1886), I, pp. 120-23. The image of the goddess was carried to the lakeside and worshipped by the women with singing and a circular dance. Later the Mahārāṇā and nobles would process in their barges round the Pichola lake and in the evening a grand firework display was held. Shyamaldas, writing in the 1880s, describes the Mahārāṇā's embarcation in his barge, seated on a lion throne beneath a *chhatrī*, and remarks that « the Resident and other Sahibs also go out in their boats to watch the festivities ».

In this painting the Mahārāṇā and his guests have embarked in readiness for their procession round the lake. The ladies are performing their circular dance in front of the triple gateway of the Ganggaur Ghat. To the left, under a pīpal tree, they are assembled in front of a small Śiva temple, and small images of Śiva and Gaurī can be seen. Śiva holds a flowering plant, almost certainly an onion, as noted by Tod (1920), II, p. 671: « [Śiva] occupies an unimportant position near [Gaurī] at the water's edge, meanly clad, smoking intoxicating herbs, and, whether by accident oant, almost certainly an onion, as noted by Tod (1920), II, p. 671: « [Śiva] occupies an unimportant position near [Gaurı] at the water's edge, meanly clad, smoking intoxicating herbs, and, whether by accident or design, holding the stalk of an onion in full blossom as a mace or club – a plant... held by the Hindus generally in detestation: and why they should on such an occasion thus degrade [Śiva], I know not ». On the lake, other nobles look on from small rowing-boats, and fish, turtles and crocodiles swim in the water. A photograph showing Ganggaur being celebrated at Udaipur in the same way in the early 20th century appears in J.S. Gahlot (1937), p. 162.

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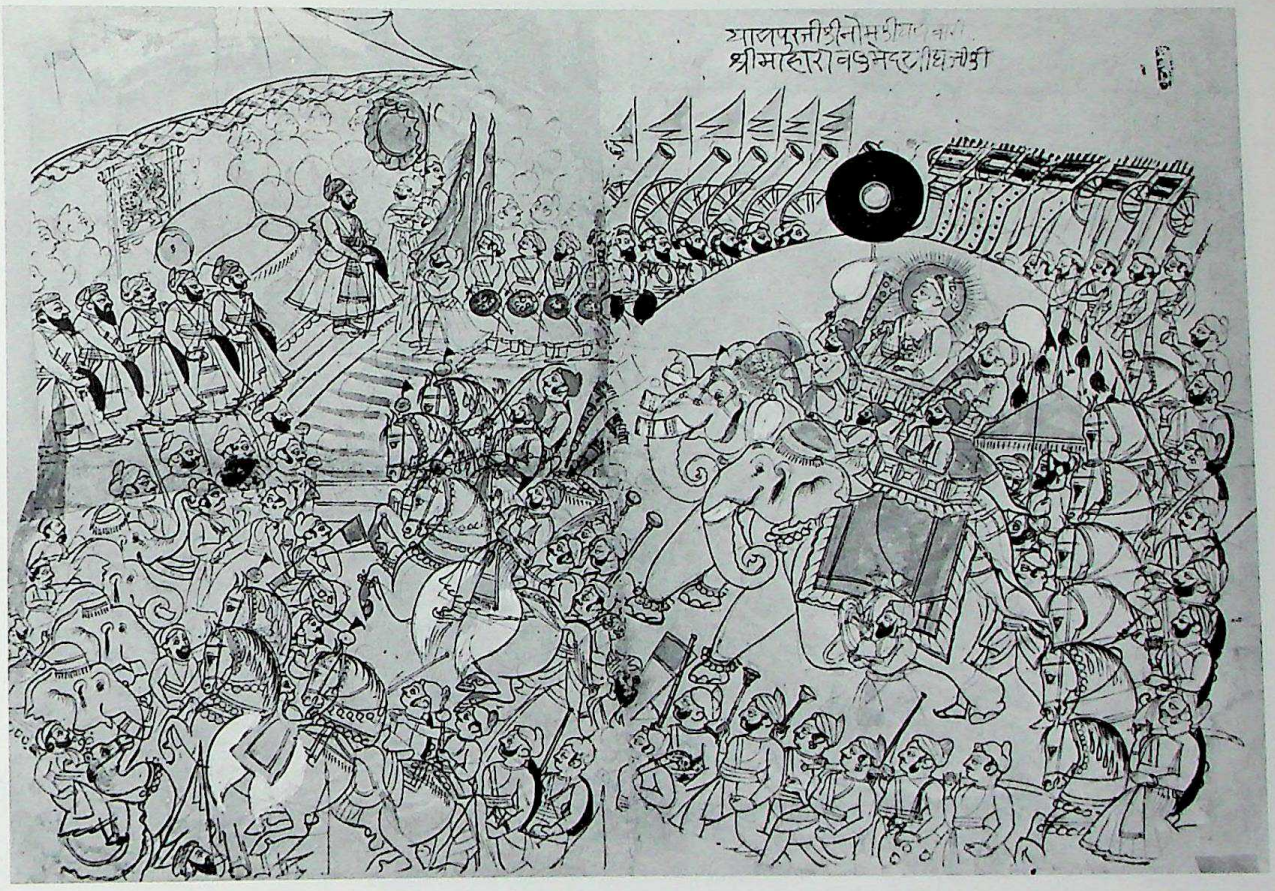

38. THE MAHĀRĀO UMED SINGH OF KOTAH (1771-1819) IN PROCESSION AT THE FESTIVAL OF NAV'RĀTRI

Kotah, c. 1850
Drawing with washes of water-colour, 35 x 51.5 cm.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 312 - 1952

W.C. Archer (1959), fig. 53

The festival of Nav'rātrī, when the procession depicted here takes place, is sacred to the goddess Pārvatī in her war-like aspect, Durgā; as mentioned in the Introduction, several rituals and ceremonies connected with the theme of war and weapons, the foundations of the state, hence of royalty, are performed in her honour for nine days. This festival, ending with Daśaharā, is described in great detail by Colonel Tod (I, p. 467 ff.).

The Rāo Umed Singh, with a great halo around his head, proceeds on his elephant, along with his son on a smaller elephant, towards the place prepared for the ceremonies which will take place in honour of the goddess; these will reach their climax with the slaughter of a buffalo, personifying the demon Mahiṣāsura, slain by Durgā (cf. miniature No. 40).

The procession is formed by horsemen and foot-soldiers; courtiers and high dignitaries on elephants and on a camel are waiting for the king; others are arrayed under an awning, by the throne, behind which there is a painted image of Durgā with many arms, with her weapons and her mount, a tiger. Above, there are several standards, war-carts and guns, which will fire blanks at the end of the ceremonies.

From the inscription (in Appendix) we learn that « Śrī Mahārāo Umed Singh-jī proceeds to worship the goddess Aśāpūrṇī (an epithet of Durgā's meaning: ' She who fulfils wishes ') ».

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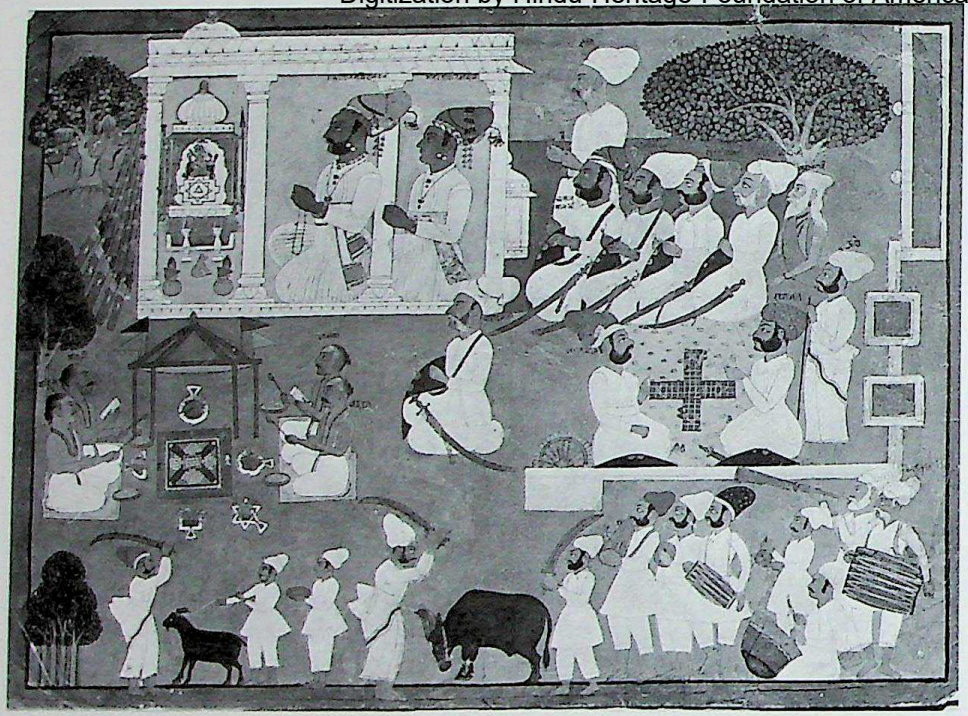

39. THE FESTIVAL OF NAV'RĀTRI

Nagaur (Marwar), late 17th century
Gouache, *32 x 44.5 cm.*
Private Collection, Rome

The *ṭhākur* Raj Kuber Singh jī and prince Śrī far Singh jī – as indicated by the inscription – pray in a shrine, holding their rosaries in their hands, kneeling in front of the goddess Durga, with many arms, placed in a niche surmounted by a dome; a cloth with a *yantra* (a symbolical diagram of the universe) hangs from the throne; a little Nandī, two vases with a little flag and ears possibly of barley, a symbol of fertility, lie at the feet of the goddess; the same ears are beneath the altar.

Out of the temple, there are some dignitaries, also kneeling, with shields and long swords. Their names are indicated, from left to right as: Bhati Jamal ji, Bhotak ji, Rama Singh ji, Dhandam Singh ji, Bharaj ji; the name of the standing figure is Ramo. On the right there are three pools seen in aerial perspective, connected by a stream ending in a mill.

Two other figures, Jagat Mal and Raj Mal, play *pacīsī* (cf. fig. 100); a man, by name Udo, stands with a staff, watching the game; in fact it is customary during any festival, such as Divālī, to pass the time playing) cf. A. Topsfield [1983], pp. 56-62, fig. 4).

Four priests, Jigno, Jaresar, Rugnath and Chandrahath are intent or performing holy ceremonies in front of the shrine; underneath a small canopy a *yantra* has been made, possibly with coloured seeds; a few ritual vases with particular shapes, also with a symbolical value possibly referring to the female principle, have been placed around it. Another figure, Bhaihaja ji by name, attends the ceremony.

Below, a few attendants are about to sacrifice a goat and a buffalo (cf. also fig. 40) in front of some drummers; the one on the right is indicated by the name of Ladi (?) Rugo.

Above, several rifles are placed on the left, leaning against the wall of the shrine; along with other weapons, they are made the object of worship during the ceremony. Shields, bows and quivers hang from a *śami* tree (*Prosopis spicigera*) appearing behind the temple. On that tree, sacred to the goddess, the five Pāṇḍava brothers (the heroes of the *Mahābhārata*) hung their weapons and in their memory, on the occasion of this festival, a few holy ceremonies are performed beneath its leafy branches; the « sacrifice » of a fruit of the tree is also performed: it is cut off by the sword of the *rājā*, whereas originally an animal was killed instead (cf. B.A. Gupte [1919], pp. 185-188; J. Tod, I, pp. 464-469; L. Rousselet, pp. 119-121; 268-270).

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40. MAHĀRĀṆĀ ARI SINGH (1761-1773) ATTENDING A BUFFALO SACRIFICE DURING THE FESTIVAL OF NAURĀTRI

Udaipur, 1761. By Bakhta
Gouache, *61 x 44.5 cm.*
Private collection

Victoria and Albert Museum (1982), no. 149;
A. Topsfield (1982), fig. 8

The martial festival of Naurātri was celebrated at the beginning of the autumn month of Āsoj, culminating with Dassehra on 10 Āsoj. The Mahārāṇā took part in worship of the sword and daily sacrifices of buffaloes and goats to the Goddess: see Tod (1920), II, pp. 679-85. The subject of this painting may be the Mahārāṇā's visit to the temple of Ambā Mātā on the second day of the festival, when several animal sacrifices were performed: Tod, II, p. 681; Shyamaldas (1886), I, pp. 127-28. The Mahārāṇā, with a green and gold nimbus and waering an orange *jāma*, stands before the shrine while his uncle Durjan Singh decapitates a buffalo with a sword blow; other buffaloes await their turn nearby. The Mewar nobles and the Mahārānā's foster-brothers (*dhābhāīs*), ministers and servants stand in attendance. They include Baghij, Bābā Bakhat Singh, Bābā Sagat Singh, Rāwat Nar Singh, Bābā Mohkam Singh, the *dhābhāīs* Rupji, Kikaji, Udai Ramji and Jodaji and others. In front of the temple enclosure, other attendants and grooms wait with elephants and horses, and a group of naked *sādhus* is being instructed by their teacher, seated against a bolster.

The painting is an early work by Bakhta, who left Udaipur some time after 1765 and spent the rest of his long working life at the *ṭhikāna* of Deogarh (see no. 24).

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41. MAHARAṆA SANGRAM SINGH (1710-1734) CELEBRATING HOLĪ IN THE SABRAT VILAS GARDEN

Udaipur, c. 1715-20
Gouache, *80.4 x 43.5 cm.*
Private collection

The Mahārāṇā, with gold nimbus, is seen twice, celebrating the spring festival of Holī with his nobles in the Sabrat Vilas garden. They sit in durbar order on the central terrace of the garden, which is shown with a fountain, ornamental water-courses and a red canopy suspended above it. The Mahārāṇā and nobles are throwing missiles of red powder (*gulāl*) at each other. The Mahārāṇā has several dishes full of the powder in front of him, while attendants offer it round to the nobles. Near the Mahārāṇā sits his young son Jagat Singh (b. 1709). Seated facing the Mahārāṇā are Rājā Kirat Singh, Jhala Ajoji, Mahārājā Pratap Singh, Rathor Shiv Singh and Thakur Idar Bhanji. Seated behind the Mahārāṇā are Pancholi Raya (?) Chand, Rāo Bakhat Singh, Mahārājā Takhat Singh, Mahārājā Sundar Singh, Tuar Kishan Singh, Chauhan Zoravar Singh and Rathor Kusaloji. Just behind this durbar group, the Mahārāṇā is seen again standing facing Rājā Kirat Singh, Prince Jagat Singh, Mahārājā Pratap Singh and Rathor Shiv Singh. In the background a group of *Jeṭhī* wrestlers are shown in combat, using the fearsome *bāghnakhā* or « tiger claws » to wound one another. It was customary for Rajput rulers to maintain a corps of these champion wrestlers, who would issue challenges to their rivals at other courts: see Tod (1920), II, pp. 751-52 and III, pp. 1617-18.

The composition of this picture derives from the painting of Mahārāṇā Amar Singh playing Holī in the same garden in c. 1708-10, now in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne: A. Topsfield (1980), no. 58, and A. Topsfield (1981), fig. 175. The present picture is less skilfully painted and the harmonious composition of its model has been distorted by the elongation of the vertical format to accomodate the additional scene of *Jeṭhī* wrestlers. Although there is perhaps only seven or eight years between the two pictures, few of the participants in the earlier Holī are seen in the later version (they include the Mahārāṇā himself and three or four others, among them the court musician Kanji, who plays the *rabāb* at the left of the present picture).

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42. SAVĀĪ KISHOR SINGH OF BEDNOR « PLAYS » ON HOLĪ

Mewar, c. 1825
Gouache, *51 x 39.5 cm.*
Private collection, London

On a terrace-garden Savāī Kishor Singh of Bednor (according to the inscription, in Appendix), a lesser *ṭhikānā* of Mewar, takes part in the festival of Holī with his courtiers; on that occasion, as mentioned above (fig. 41), it is customary to throw on each other coloured powders, which in this miniature are kept in large round vessels.

The garden, surrounded by walls and accessible through a flight of steps on a side, is divided into various geometrical sections, where there is also a swimming-pool crowded by a few persons playing with water and coloured powder. A small group of musicians and a few women, taking part in the play of Holī, are depicted in the foreground.

The perspective of this miniature is particularly interesting: all the figures are exclusively portrayed in profile, whereas the garden is drawn in aerial perspective, as a bird's eye view. Furthermore, the countryside surrounding the right and left sides of the wall is seen turned over by 90 degrees: therefore, trees seem to sink their roots into the garden wall; there also appear two horizons on the sides.

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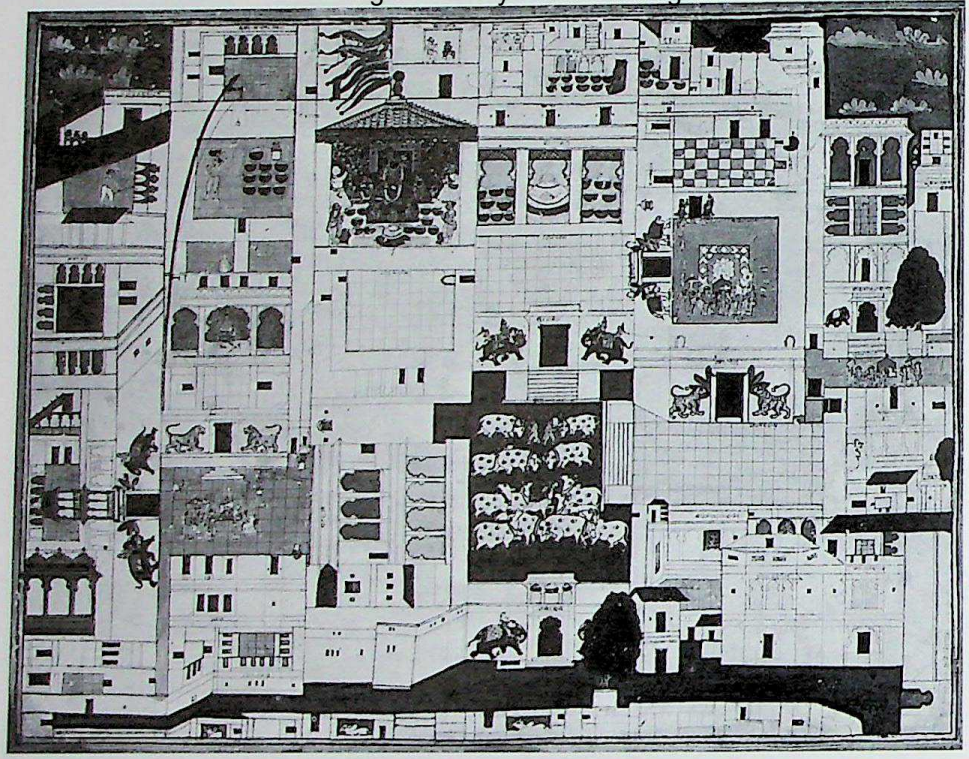

43. THE TEMPLE OF NATHDVARA

Nathdvara, c. 1860
Gouache, *30.5 x 39.5 cm.; 32.5 x 41 cm. with border*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 85 IS 28 - 1979

Indian Paintings (catalogue 1974), fig. 44

Nathdvara, about 40 km. from Udaipur, is one of the famous places of pilgrimage devoted to the cult of Kṛṣṇa, who is worshipped there as Śrī Nathjī.

The image kept in this temple is cursorily carved with a hand raised, in a rather worn-out black stone, and possibly dates back to a very ancient period (Kuṣāṇa). It is said to have been found near Mathura by Vallabhācārya – the founder of an important devotional religious movement which started in the 15th century – and, being recognized a Kṛṣṇa, to have been made an object of veneration. From Vraj (Brindaban) near Mathura, where the god spent his childhood and where an important temple had been built, the statue was taken by Raj Singh (1652-80), the king of Mewar, towards Udaipur in order to rescue it from the persecutions of the Moghul emperor, Aurangzeb. The cart carrying it happened to break in the neighbourhood of present-day Nathdvara; this was understood as an auspicious sign for the contruction of a new temple at that site.

There arose also an important school of painting with very distinctive features in style and subject matter, which was chiefly religious and inspired by Kṛṣṇa's life.

This miniature reproduces the whole temple compound, with its main shrine, various buildings, courts and loggias, as well as some of the activities taking place there: the offering of food to the god (*pūjā*) and the processions of devotees and priests; in a large courtyard the cows sacred to the god are tended by two attendants. The function of some of the buildings is also indicated: various kinds of goods are stored in the loggias facing the courtyard where the cows are kept (*par'chattī* means store-roof); the courtyard on the right of the shrine is called *ratan'cok*, namely « jewel square »; other buildings are used as living quarters (*sām'ghar*).

The perspective of these complex buildings is very peculiar, each of them having its own viewpoint; some, such as the main shrine, are drawn frontally, whereas all the courts are seen in aerial perspective from above; the palaces on the sides, on the contrary, are « laid down » on the right and on the left; those at the back (bottom left) are also quite visible, showing their front to the upper side of the miniature.

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44. SHUKADEVA RECITES THE BHĀGAVATA PURĀṆA TO KING PARIKSHIT

Kishangarh, 1760-70
Gouache, *40.5 x 55.3 cm.;*
41.8 x 57 cm. with border
Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, MIK I 5710

R. Weber (1982), pp. 508-514, fig. 103.

As related in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (beginning of chapter 10), king Parikshit of Hastinapura is condemned to die from snake-bite within seven days for having offended an ascetic. He leaves his court and seeks shelter on the banks of the Ganges, where he meets the holy man Shukadeva, who advises him to spend the short time left to him listening to story of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*; that will lead him to salvation and to the redemption from the sin committed by him.

Also the king of Kishangarh, Samant Singh (1748-64), abdicated the crown to take to ascetic life. Cf. A Banerji (1954-1), pp. 13-25, fig. 6. But the king portrayed here seems to bear a closer resemblance to the Rājā Sardar Singh (cf. A. Banerji [1954-2], fig. 116). At any rate, the landscape depicted here is reminiscent of that surrounding the little town in Rajasthan.

There are depicted two scenes, taking place at different times, separated by a river (the Ganges?). Above, the holy man reaches the neighbourhood of a town (Kishangarh?); he is stark naked, his body of a blue colour, covered in ashes as a sign of penance, with long hair and a large bright halo around his head. He is followed at a distance by a large crowd. There are interesting little scenes from life: a boy doing again his turban, or the two maidens quarrelling and being scolded by their mother. The king, dressed in white, and his dignitaries, standing in a reverent posture, are waiting for the great *guru* on the right; some are prostrating themselves on the ground. On the other side of a lake, also the women lean forward to see Shukadeva's arrival and some are about to swim across the river to go to him.

The slightly bent profile of the river favours a greater concentration of the attention on the scene below, crowded with figures.

Shukadeva's figure stands out in the centre, sitting on a high throne, depicted in the act of telling the sacred text; he is addressing the king and his numerous retinue of dignitaries and soldiers, with swords, shields and daggers, all portrayed in profile, sitting in a dignified and orderly manner on the left side of the miniature. In contrast, the disciples and followers of the saint are placed in a disorderly manner in the middle and on the right. They are portrayed in various postures, wearing a plain *dhotī* and a sash over their shoulders; the sacred thread of brahmans and the marks over the forehead, characteristic of Śiva's and Viṣṇu's followers, are also visible on some of them; some keep their hands hidden in the pouch (*gomukh*) where the rosary is placed.

It should be pointed out how the artist meant to create a remarkable variety in postures as well a a great diversity of human types, especially among the *sādhus*, which makes this painting extremely interesting.

A miniature showing an identical subject, but of a lesser artistic value, is at the Victoria and Albert Museum (IS 556 - 1952) and was published by M.M. Deneck (1967), fig. 42 (Kishangarh, c. 1757).

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

45. ASCETIC

Bikaner, c. 1690
Gouache, *15 x 8 cm.; 22 x 14 cm. with border*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
88 IS 343 - 1951

The ideal life of a man, as pointed out by ancient texts, should be divided into four separate periods: first childhood and adolescence when, under the guidance of a master (*guru*), one should learn religious teachings; then there follows the time of building a family and fulfilling social duties, which is to be accomplished according to the teachings one has received. Then, when grandchildren are born and life has gone by with all its countless experiences, there comes the time of renouncing and shunning the world, and of devoting oneself only to a spiritual quest; hence a man relinquishes his home and affections in order to retire to a lonely spot to pray and meditate. But he goes beyond the stage of a hermit: as a beggar, he comes back to the world with a new mind in order to show others the path to salvation through his example and his word.

Instances of kings relinquishing their throne to follow a way of renunciation and spiritual life are not rare in India (cf. fig. 44).

This miniature portrays an ascetic, wearing a plain *dhotī*, partly folded over his left arm; he walks leaning on a thin stick; he wears a necklace of seeds on his neck and holds a rosary in his hand; a curious hat made of leaves rests on his head.

The inscription reports the artist's name: Husām al-dīn.

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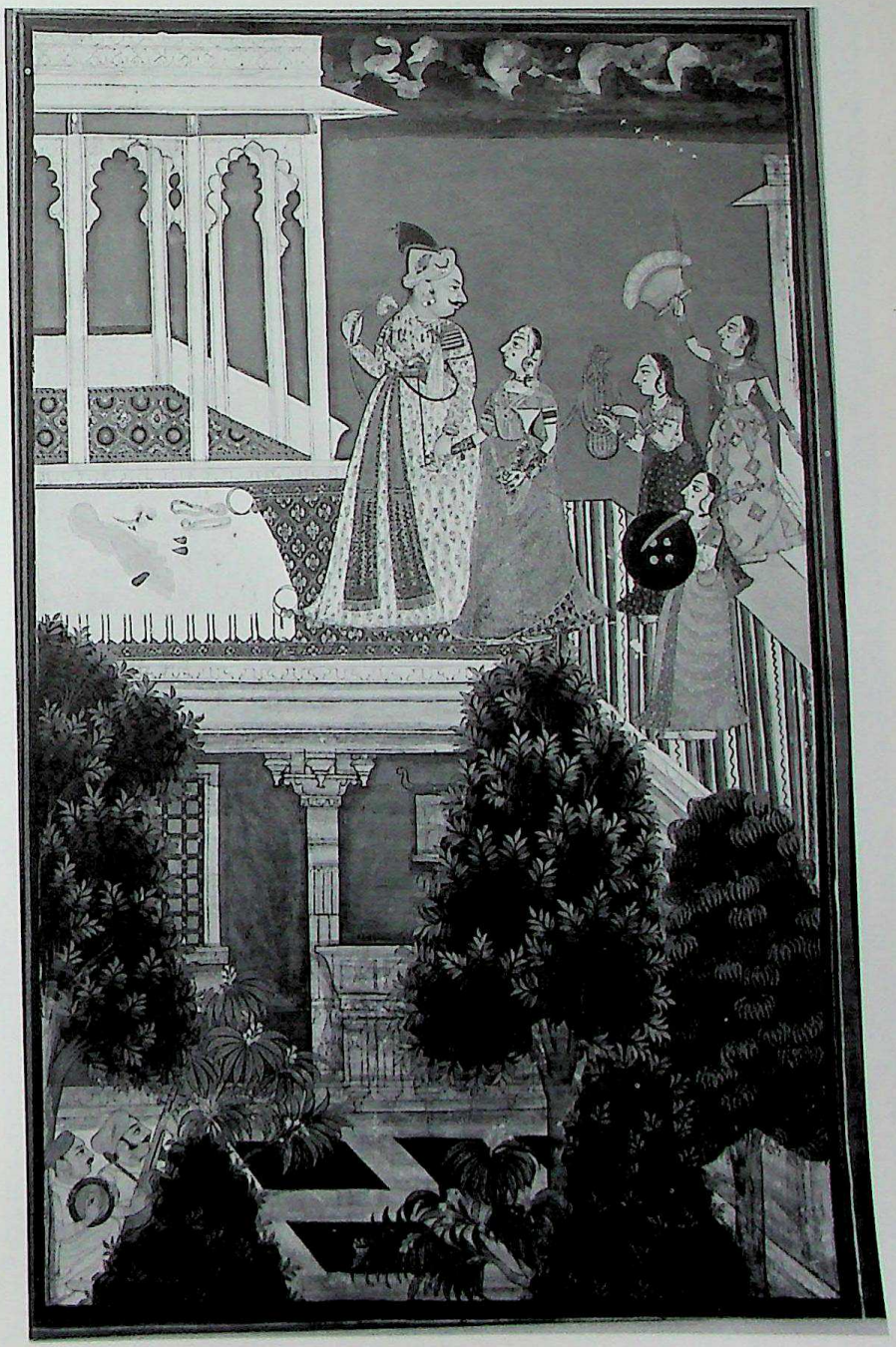
46. NOBLEMAN WITH A LADY

Udaipur, c. 1740-50
Gouache, *40 x 24.5 cm.; 46 x 31 cm. with border*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
84 IS 117 - 1954

A. Topsfield (1984), fig. 25

A nobleman leads a woman, holding her by the hand, towards a bed placed on a terrace, next to a pretty pavilion; he is followed by three maidens carrying his shield and bow, a fan and a water-pipe. Two musicians play their instruments in the courtyard below.

The male figure might be the same appearing in a miniature published by A. Topsfield (1980, fig. 133), and identified by an inscription as Bābā Bakhat Singh, the son of Takhat Singh of Udaipur, one of the Mahārāṇā Amar Singh's brothers.



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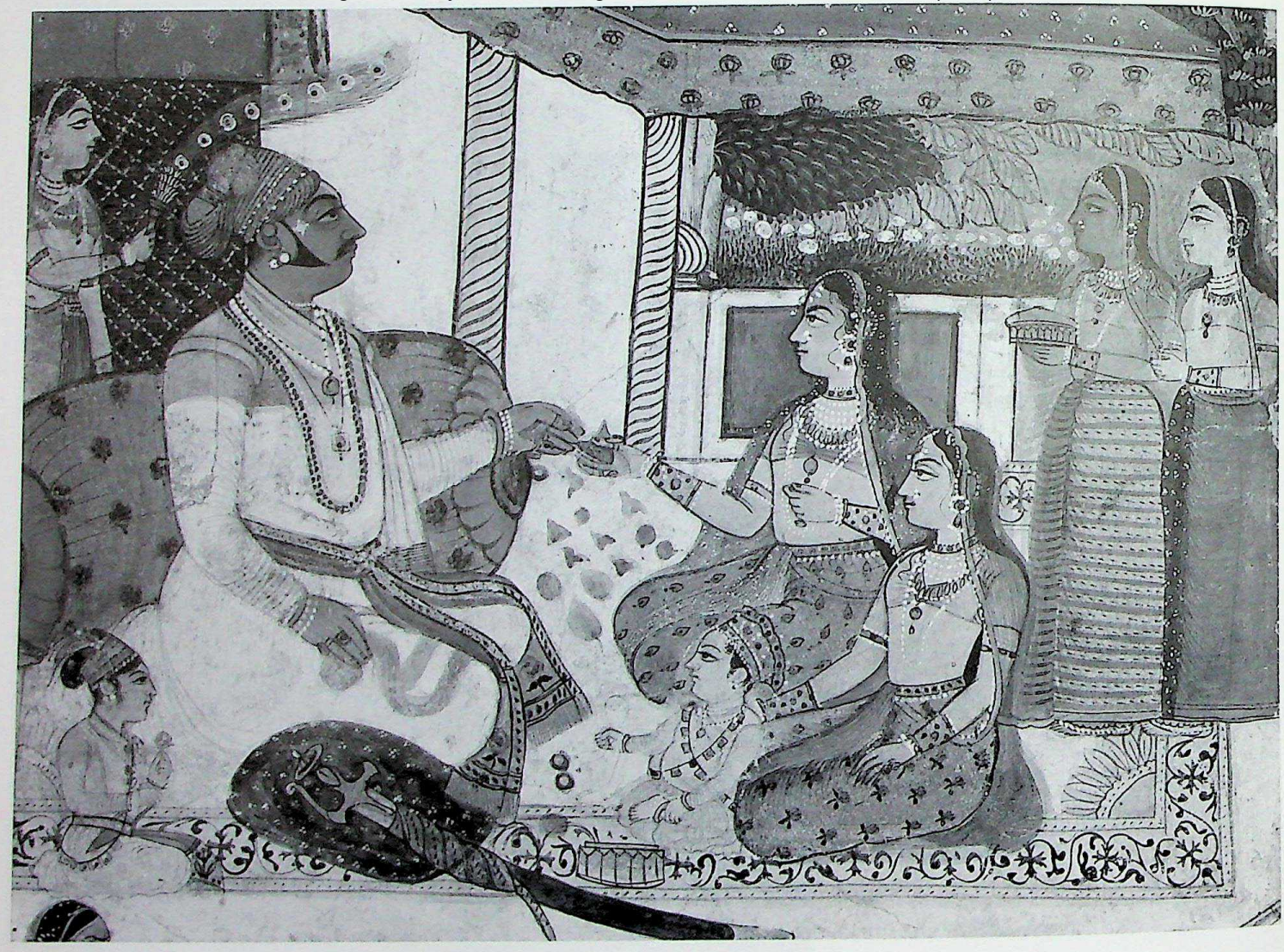

47. RĀJĀ WITH TWO LADIES

Nagaur (Marwar), late 18th century
Gouache, *14.3 x 19 cm.*
Private collection, London

The king is engaged in conversation with two ladies, wives or concubines, sitting in front of him; one of them seems to be showing him a child, another being seated next to the *rājā*. The latter is shown in the act of offering a betel leaf to one of the women, which usually means the end of a conversation, hence leave. Two maids are approaching, bearing a tray, while another fans the king from behind with a *caurī*.

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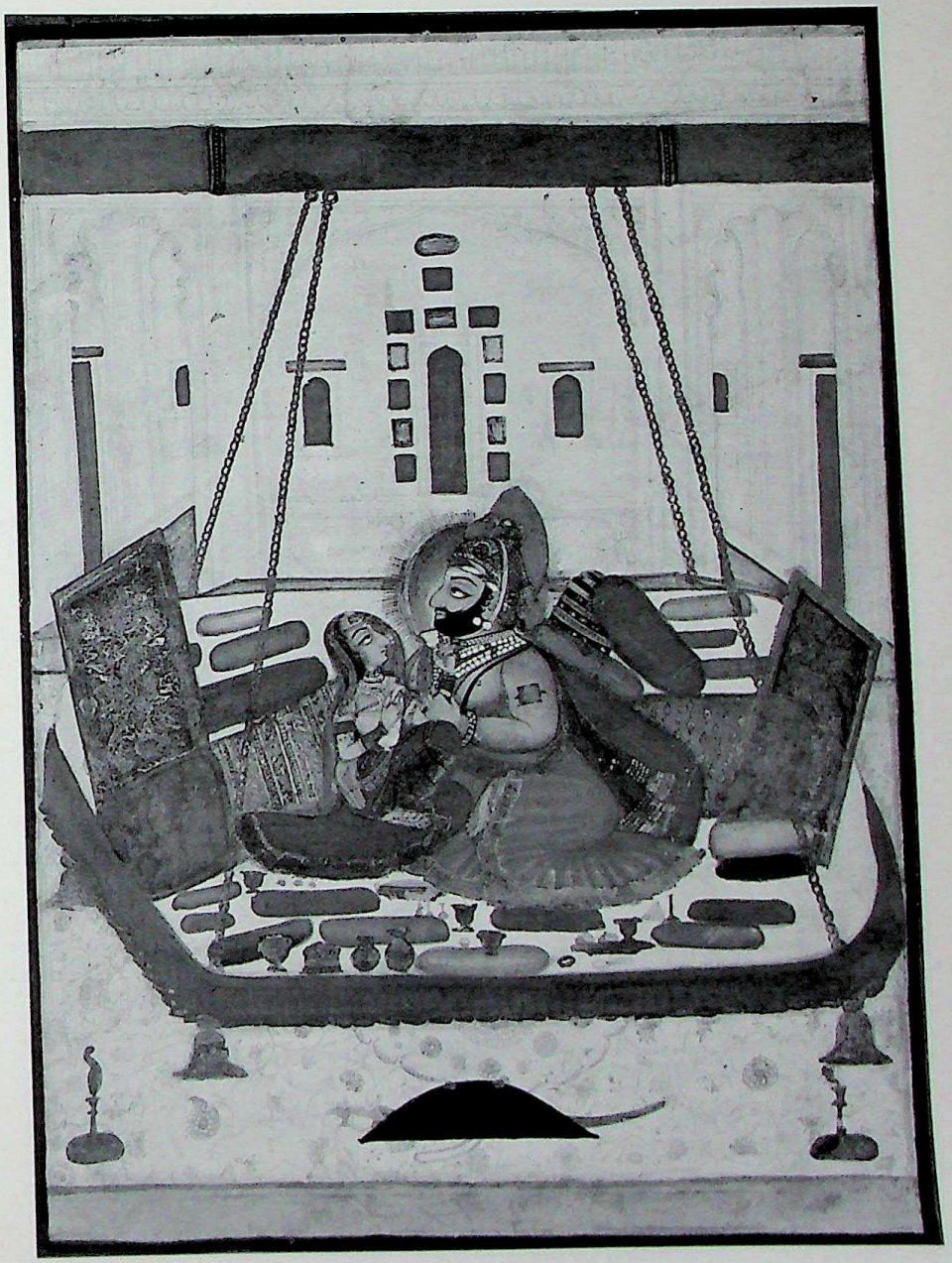
48. LOVE SCENE

Udaipur, c. 1815. Attributed to Chokha
Gouache, *20.2 x 14.5 cm.*
Private collection, London



The Mahārāṇā Bhim Singh (1778-1828) sits with a woman on a rocking-bed with high side edges; they are portrayed in a quite chaste loving attitude; in fact *rājās* seldom appear in explicitly erotic scenes, though the latter are rather frequent. Embraces are often depicted in miniatures, being expressions of male power, even sexual.

The attitude and look of the figures show their deep involvement. Cushions, tumblers and goblets are strewn on the bed; the shield and sword of the *rāṇā* have been left on the floor; on the back wall there is a decoration with painted mirrors and niches, of the kind to be seen still today in the palace at Udaipur (cf. fig. 28).

This miniature is ascribed to the artist Chokha (cf. fig. 29).

For the identification of the king cf. A. Topsfield (1980), figs. 206-207.

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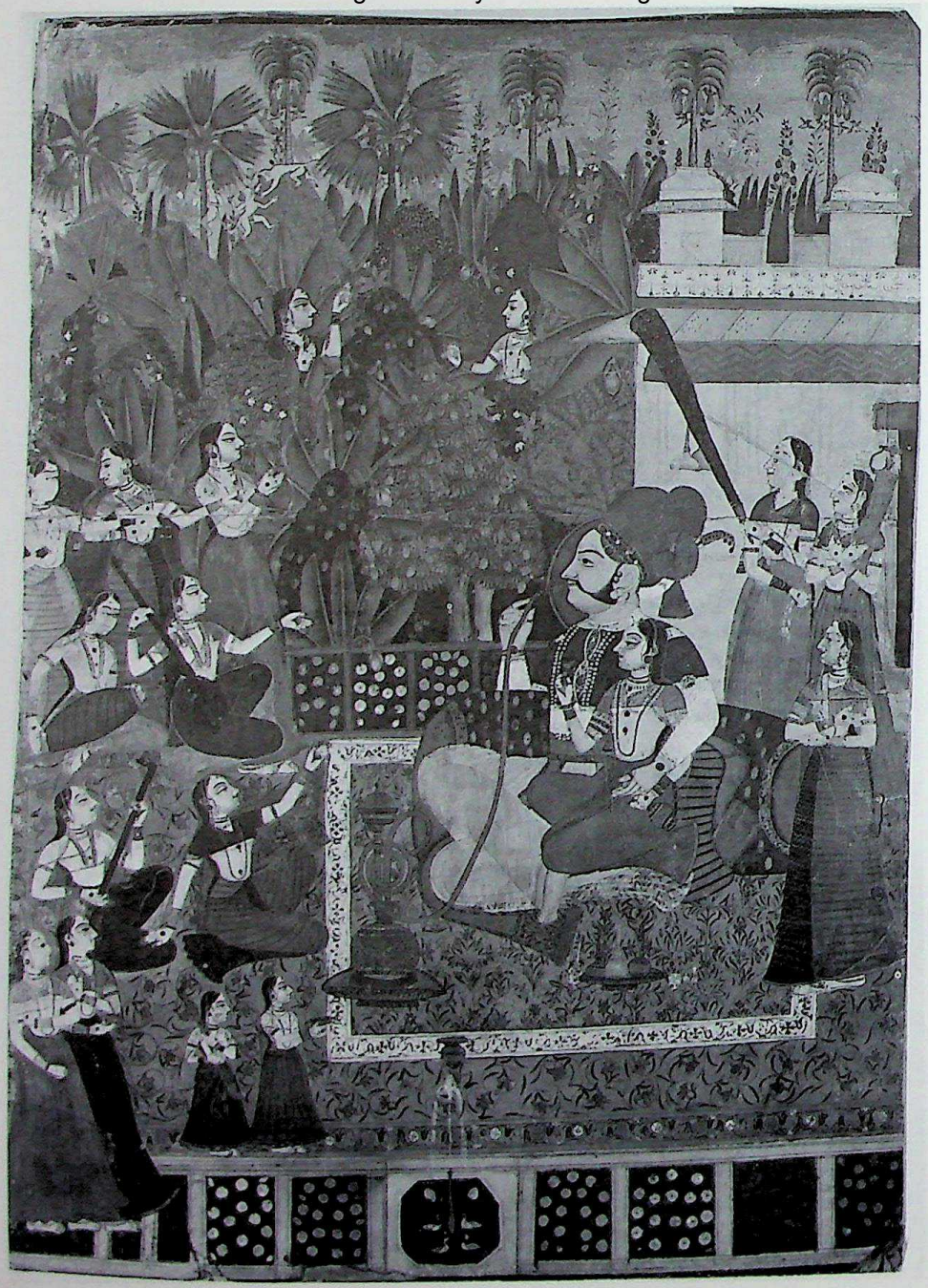

49. RAJA IN HIS HAREM

Bundi, second half of the 18th century
Gouache, *62 x 35 cm*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS 65 - 1959

A Rajput king spends pleasant moments of leisure on a terrace facing the garden of the harem, with his favourite next to him, surrounded by other women, maids and players, all on a scale smaller than that of his figure; the two servants portrayed below, one of whom bearing a tray, appear even smaller.

He sits on two brightly coloured carpets, leaning against a bolster, and smokes the *ḥuqqā*, while watching the three players and a singer performing in front of him.

A tray with some flasks of liqueur is placed on the carpet besides the couple; one flask is held by the favourite, who holds a glass, too.

On the right there is a pavilion, the terrace of which, with a gracefully ornated parapet, is surmounted by two small kiosks. Blooming flower-beds and a little octagonal fountain where a few geese float are placed around. A few monkeys and birds play in a garden luxuriant with flowers, fruit-trees, palms and banana-trees.

The inscription at the back relates that this is the « Mahārāṇā jī Śrī Ratan Singh jī », possibly the ruler of an estate not far from Bundi and Kotah (Karauli?).

Cf. also M. C. Beach (1974), fig. 125, pp. 47-48.

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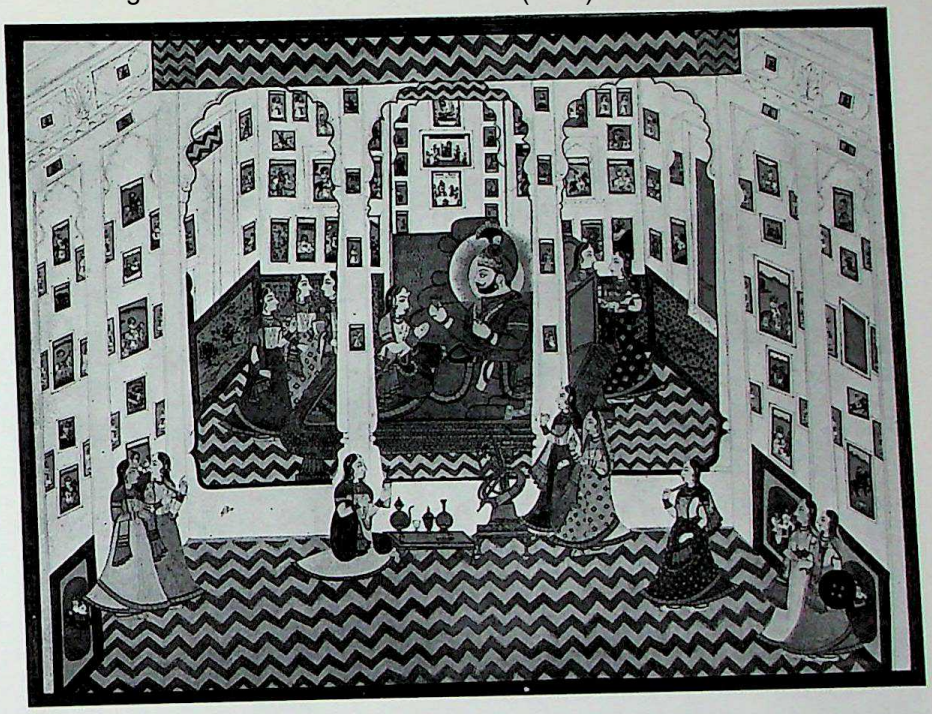


50. IN THE PICTURE-GALLERY

Udaipur, c. 1830
Gouache, *30 x 40.5 cm.; 36.5 x 45 cm. with border*
Private collection, Ludwigshafen

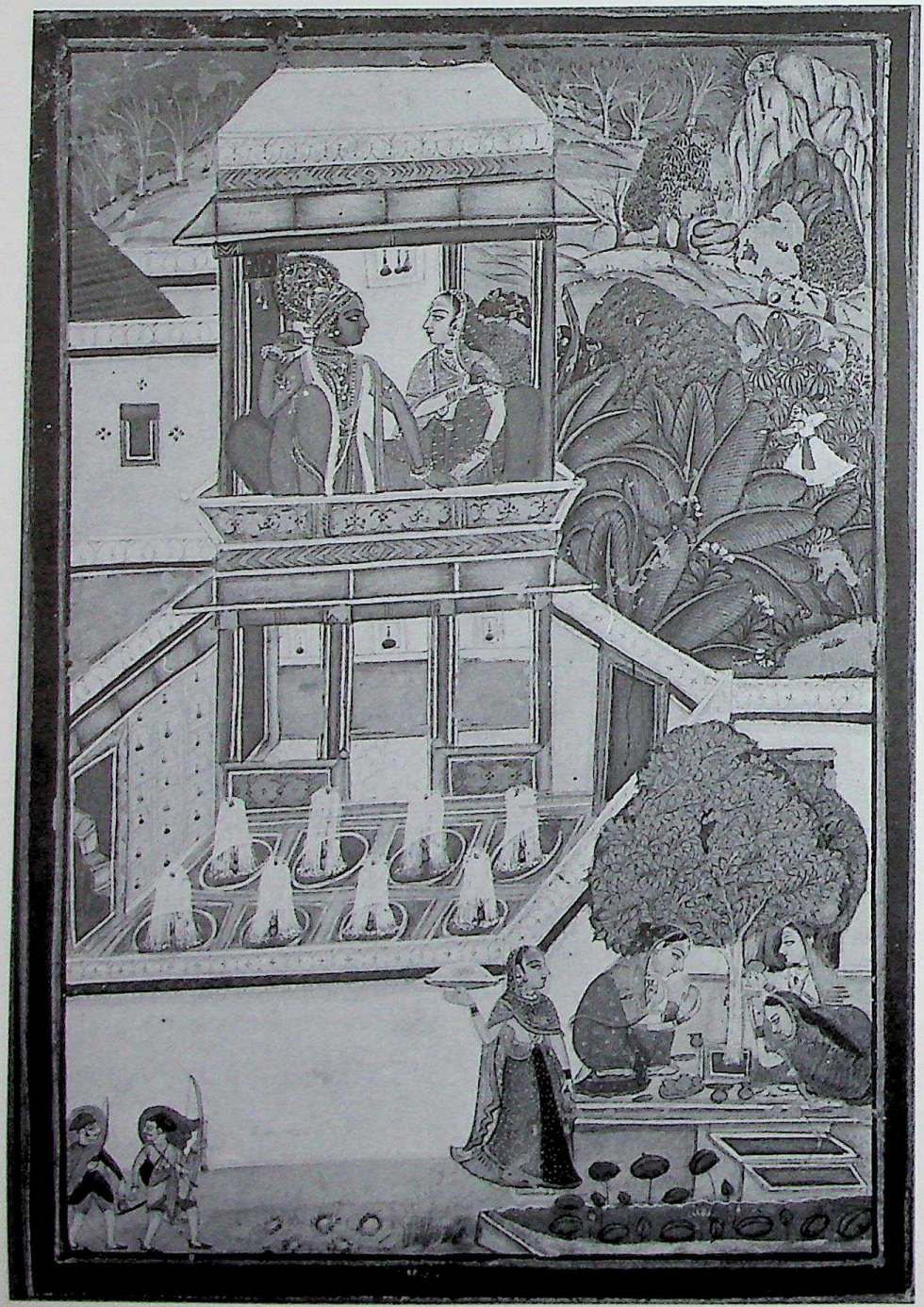
A king, possibly Jawan Singh of Udaipur (1828-38) (cf. A. Topsfield [1980], fig. 216), entertains his wife or a concubine in the picture-gallery of his palace, drinking wine or liqueur; both sit on a large sofa-bed strewn with several cushions, surrounded by more women, lady companions and attendants. A small table with vases and jugs and a big water-pipe is placed in the foreground.

Miniatures, originally collected in albums, subsequently came to be used – perhaps under Western influence – to decorate some areas in royal palaces, as may be gathered from this painting and as may be seen even today at Udaipur, Jodhpur and elsewhere.

In the Hindu as well as Muslim palaces, there was not a clear-cut distinction in the functional character of the environment, except for rooms meant for official functions; the king himself chose one of his magnificent and often very decorated rooms, which was prepared at once, whether he wished to dine, entertain his women, sleep, or go about any other business. For rendezvouses he preferred to choose the Śīś Mahal, namely the Room of Mirrors, or else small environments or little kiosks (Amber), where the decoration on the walls and on the ceilings, magically lit by the flickering light of candles, made the environment extremely suggestive. Furniture, which was reduced to bare essentials – at least until the British take-over – consisted in large and comfortable sofa-beds, or carpets, where the king could lie down, resting on bolsters.

The choice of the environment was also determined by the season: in fact there were winter quarters, better exposed to the sun, with thick curtains to protect doors and windows (a heating system with water pipes had been created at Amber), and summer quarters, made cooler by some little fountains and playing of fountains, and built in a way to make the passage of draughts easier.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)



51. BĀRAH'MĀSĀ, THE MONTH OF JYEṢṬHA (MAY-JUNE)

Bundi, c. 1760
Gouache, *22.7 x 14.8 cm.; 32.1 x 23.5 cm. with border*
Private collection, Ludwigshafen

The protagonists of this love scene are the god Kṛṣṇa and a young shepherdess (*gopī*) who, as mentioned above, represents the mind of the devotee in spiritual communion with the god.

The couple sit in a pretty pavilion facing a courtyard with many little fountains. Kṛṣṇa's colour is sky-blue and he wears a characteristic fan-like headgear decorated with gems; he holds a flute in his hand.

The little courtyard opens to an arcade leading to another courtyard; through one of the two side doors one may notice stairs in a curious perspective; one wall is decorated with small niches containing flasks of liqueur or perfume.

Below, a few women are bringing their offering around a tree: in India, since a very early period, trees have been regarded as sacred, being the seat of beneficial deities (one should be reminded that also Buddhism, taking earlier religious beliefs as a starting point, adopted as a spiritual symbol, symbolizing the Buddha himself, the *Ficus religiosa*, the *bodhī* tree under which Śākyamuni reached enlightenment). Little and simple altars built under trees which are made the object of veneration may be seen in Indian villages even today.

Two figures bearing bows and arrows – possibly hunters – are getting near the women. Beyond a luxuriant garden with palms and other trees the landscape becomes barer; the sun is setting behind a boulder, painted in a striking pink colour.

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52. LADY LOOKING AT HERSELF IN A MIRROR

Jaipur, mid-18th century
Gouache, *20 x 23 cm.*
Rietberg Museum, Zürich, 1140

A young lady sits in a terrace, leaning against a cylindrical bolster, in front of a mirror held by another maiden. A third female figure, bearing a flower with folded petals, stands behind her.

The three ladies wear bodices (*colīs*) and skirts (*ghāgh'rās*) of a light material. Transparent veils with dark hems cover their heads and fall over their shoulders, showing their hair style with pony tails.

Some tree-leaves appear above the parapet of the terrace. One should notice the delicacy with which the artist has treated the anatomical features of the faces, conferring them substance with a light shading.

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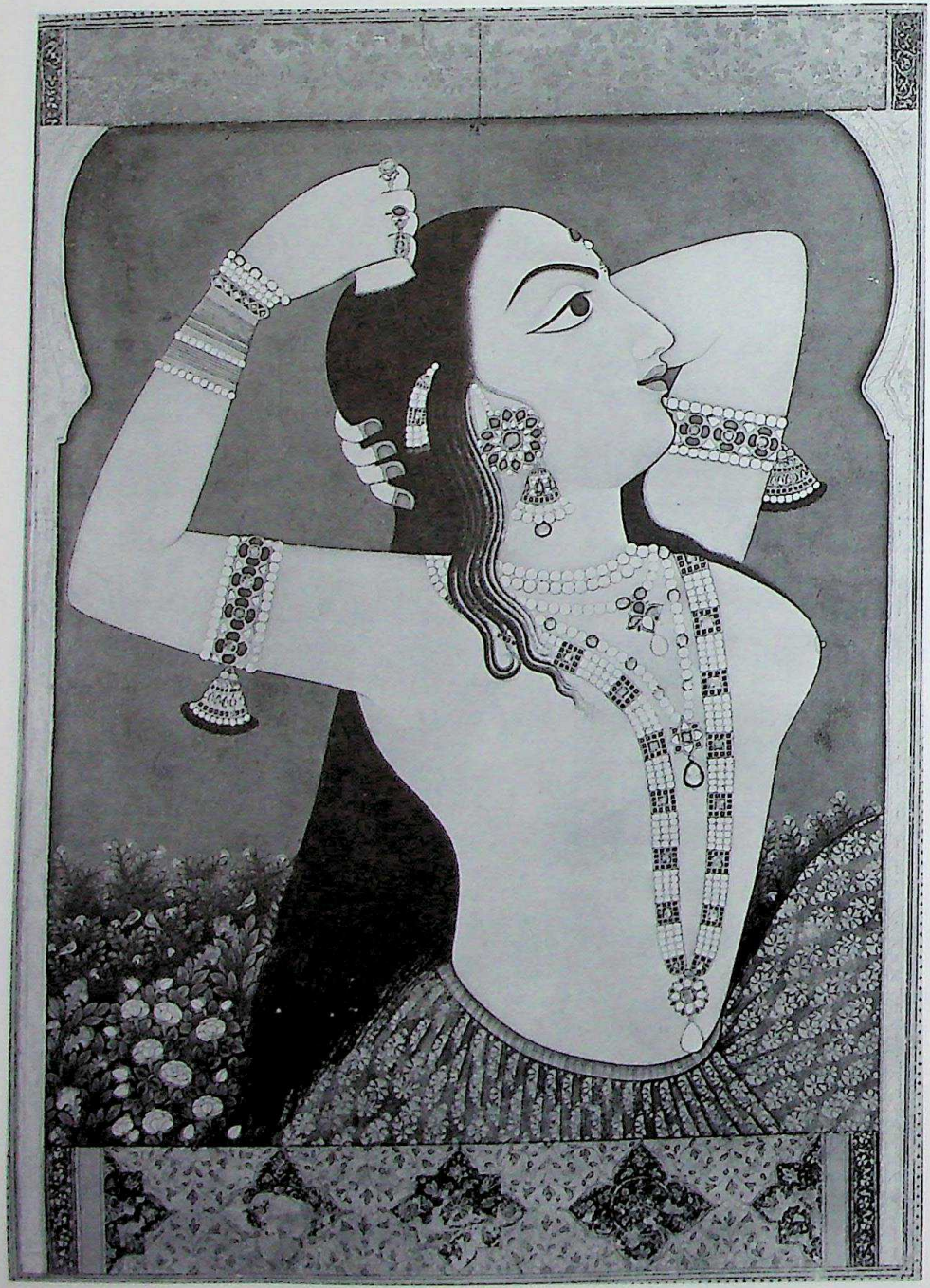

53. LADY COMBING HER HAIR

Jaipur, c. 1790
Gouache, *38 x 27.5 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
IS 6 - 1955

P. Rawson (1961);
A. Topsfield (1984), frontispiece and fig. 29.

Only the bust of this figure is portrayed, with bare bosoms, adorned with many jewels and raising her arms in the act of combing her hair.

The figure is framed in a window with a polilobe arch, a low parapet covered with a cloth with a floral design, and a curtain rolled up in the upper part; flowers and little birds are in the background.

The delicacy and skill with which decorative and ornamental details have been painted creates an obvious and refined contrast with the dark and uniform background surface, and with the young lady's light, hardly modelled flesh.

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54. LADY SMOKING A ḤUQQĀ

Karauli, 18th century
Gouache, *15.9 x 14.2 cm.*
Private collection, London

A lady, wearing a big turban, sits in a terrace with ornate balustrades, smoking a *ḥuqqā*, leaning against a bolster; facing her there is a maid joining her hands in act of respect and greeting, while another fans her from behind with a *caurī*. A few flasks with liqueur or wine, glasses, a spittoon (*pīk'-dān*) and betelleaves lie on the floor.

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55. LADY AND HANDMAID

Bundi, second half of the 18th century
Gouache, *21 x 18 cm.*
Rietberg Museum, Zürich, 1069

R. Skelton (1960), p. 40, fig. 15.

A young lady is distracted from her long meditation at night by a maidservant bringing her food. The sash holding her knees is, in fact, generally used to keep a given posture for long (*yogapaṭṭā*).

The scene takes place on a terrace covered with a floral carpet. The lady, sitting on a second carpet, leans against a cylindrical bolster, holding a jug and a tumbler in her hands. Her head is covered with a thin transparent veil; she wears a white bodice, and her pink trousers appear through a white tunic.

The maidservant is portrayed standing in the act of offering her a tray and a tumbler; she wears identical clothes and a turban in Moghul style. Two blossoming trees are on both sides in the background; dawn is merely suggested by a faint light.

As indicated in the inscription (cf. Appendix), this miniature possibly belonged to a set illustrating « the inmates of the royal harem ».

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56. LADIES WITH PIGEONS

Bundi, c. 1780
Gouache, *32.5 x 22 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 96 - 1952

W. Archer (1959), fig. 26;
C. Allen (1984), fig. p. 207;
A. Topsfield (1981), fig. 180.

The scene takes place on a full-moon night on a terrace with low open-work parapets. Two young ladies are seated on a carpet; they are leaning against a cylindrical bolster, which in turn rests on the edge of a bed with a floral cover. While embracing her companion, one of them watches the acrobatics of a few pigeons on a trestle, whereas the other turns towards a maid of honour standing behind her, holding a fan. Another attendant, also standing, watches the birds, while a third one sits on the floor, playing a *tān'pūrā*. Yet another young lady sits on the floor, holding two flowers and watching the two ladies. Various objects lie on the floor and on the carpet: a tray with glasses and bottles of wine or liqueur, a jewel-case, little boxes and vessels for perfumes or spices, or for the attar of roses (*gulāb'pāś*), the ingredients to prepare the *pān* and the bowl where to spit in (*pīk'dān*), fruits and two little plants in bloom.

The subject of pigeons recurs rather frequently in harem scenes, because during their long leisure moments, princesses also practised the art of taming those animals.

Special friendships between women in harems must have been common, as is shown by some miniatures depicting them while embracing, and in erotic scenes, too (A. Dallapiccola [1973], figs. 34, 35, 36).

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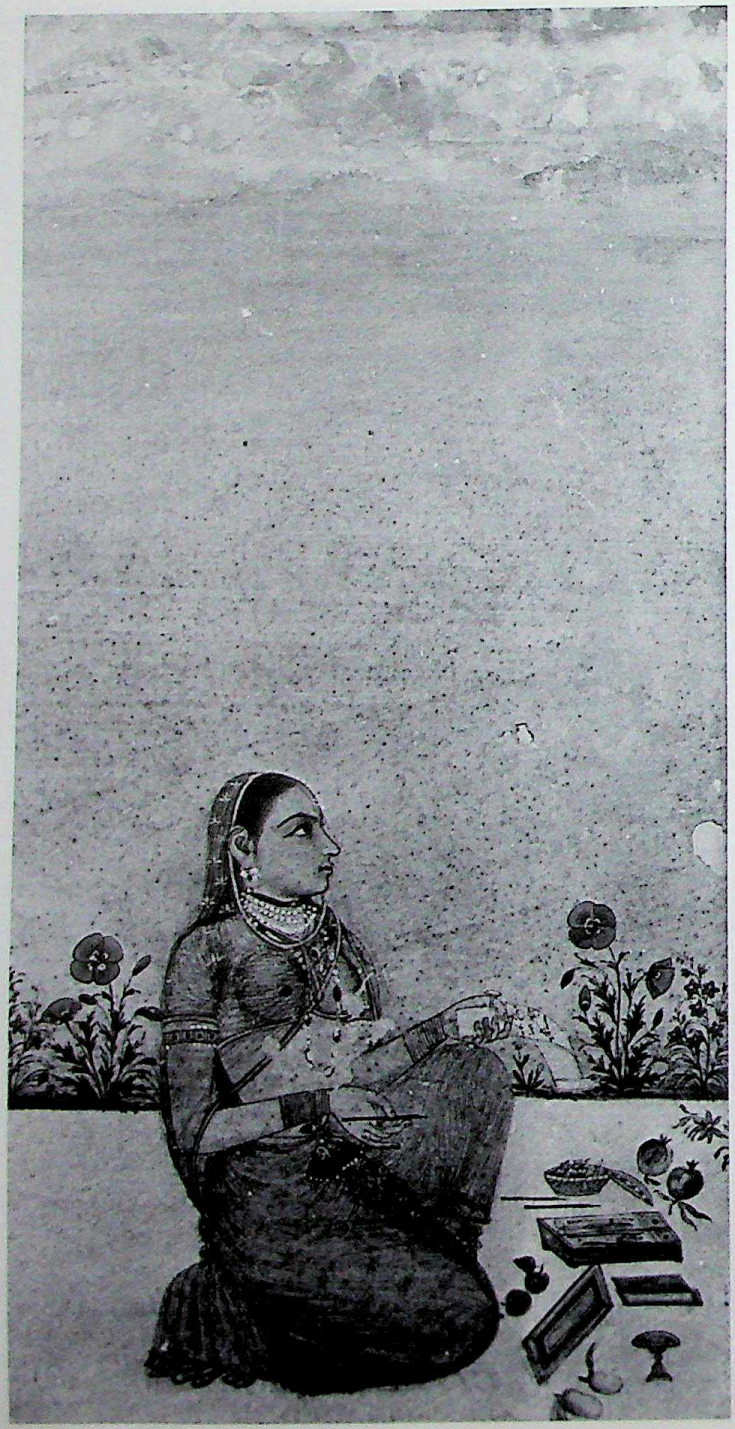

57. LADY WRITING TO HER BELOVED

Bikaner, c. 1680
Gouache, *16.5 x 9 cm.; 23 x 14.5 cm. with border*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
88 IS 224 - 1955

A maiden sitting on a terrace is intent on writing in Persian to her beloved in front of his portrait; writing items, a few pomegrenades and other fruits are scattered on the floor. She wears a bodice (*colī*), a skirt (*ghāgh'rā*) and a veil covering her head and shoulders.

This scene is rather common in the representation of female figures, just as the image of a woman intent on painting the portrait of her man. However leading secluded lives, princesses often were learned and keen on beauty; hence one should not be surprised to see a princess writing in Persian.

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58. HAREM SCENE

Bundi, late 18th century
Gouache, *23.5 x 15.5 cm.*
Private collection, Milan

Miniature Indiane del XVIII secolo (1977), fig. 3

This miniature depicts a graceful scene in a harem with lively details: a dog has caught a parrot by its wing and two maidens rush to its help; a maid of honour seizes the dog by its leg, while the other girl, perhaps a noblewoman or a princess, judging by her clothes, suddenly stands up overturning a bottle and raises a cane to frighten it. The scene takes place in a courtyard surrounded by high walls, faced by a bedroom on the right. The princess wears trousers in the Moghul fashion, a scarf and a tall headgear, whereas the other maid is dressed in a *sāṛī*. A big coffer and a few bottles and trays suggest that the young lady was possibly intent on adorning herself and eating on the part of the terrace where a carpet and cushions are laid.

Above, doves and other birds stand on a trestle and on the parapets of the upper terraces of the palace; beyond the wall one may see the wide leaves of a palm-tree and a far-away hill; the sky seems to be loaded with rain.

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59. LADY FLYING A KITE

Jodhpur, c. 1760
Gouache, *16.8 x 10 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
86 IS 555 - 1952

The Indian Heritage (1982), p. 60, fig. 148;
W.C. Archer (1960), fig. 56.

The elegant figure of a maid flies a kite holding it by its thread.

The meadow where the scene takes place is merely suggested by few little plants, whereas the figure stands out against a uniform brown-purple background; the kite reaches up to an overcast sky.

The woman wears a long white tunic opening at the front and forming a short train at the back on the top of her trousers; she wears a little turban on her head. Her thin and slender body and her long eyes in the shape of « lotus petals » are characteristic of the school of Jodhpur. The movement of the upper hand emphasizes that of the figure, conferring it grace and charm.

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60. LADIES PLAYING WITH A YO-YO

Mewar, end of the 18th century
Gouache, *39 x 21 cm.; 44 x 25.5 cm. with border*
Private collection, Rome

A lady flinging a yo-yo from above with a gracious movement is being watched by a kneeling maidservant; two others are spinning tops in the foreground. An attendant is approaching bringing more toys on a tray, along with another lady who is giving a yo-yo to a little girl. The figures are potrayed against a uniform green background; the meadow where the scene takes place is merely suggested by the presence of a few flowers; the sky above is chequered with clouds.

A miniature portraying a young lady with a yo-yo in the same posture as the central figure is at the Rietberg Museum in Zürich (No. 1178, Jodhpur, 18th century).

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

61. HAWKING

Kishangarh or Udaipur, early 19th century
Gouache, *32 x 22 cm.*
Private collection, Rome

A princess, with a halo around her head, is about to ford a river riding a white-spotted horse whose legs have been dyed red; as may be seen also from other miniatures such practice was rather common. The young lady bears a hawk on a hand protected by a gauntlet; the bird of prey is depicted in another scene, too, at the top on the left, while dashing at the prey and catching it on the wing.

A few buildings with graceful pavilions and loggias appear in the distance. The elegant movement of the horse is enhanced by the fluttering of the scarf of the princess and by the rotation of her trunk twisting back to hold the animal.

Whereas the female figure may be connected to the Kishangarh school, the horse, the natural environment and the colours suggest that the miniature may rather belong to the school of Udaipur. It might be the work by a painter native of that city, but working at Kishangarh.

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62. DEŚĀKHYA RĀGIṆĪ

Jaipur, 18th century
Gouache, *29.5 x 22 cm.*
Rietberg Museum, Zürich, 823

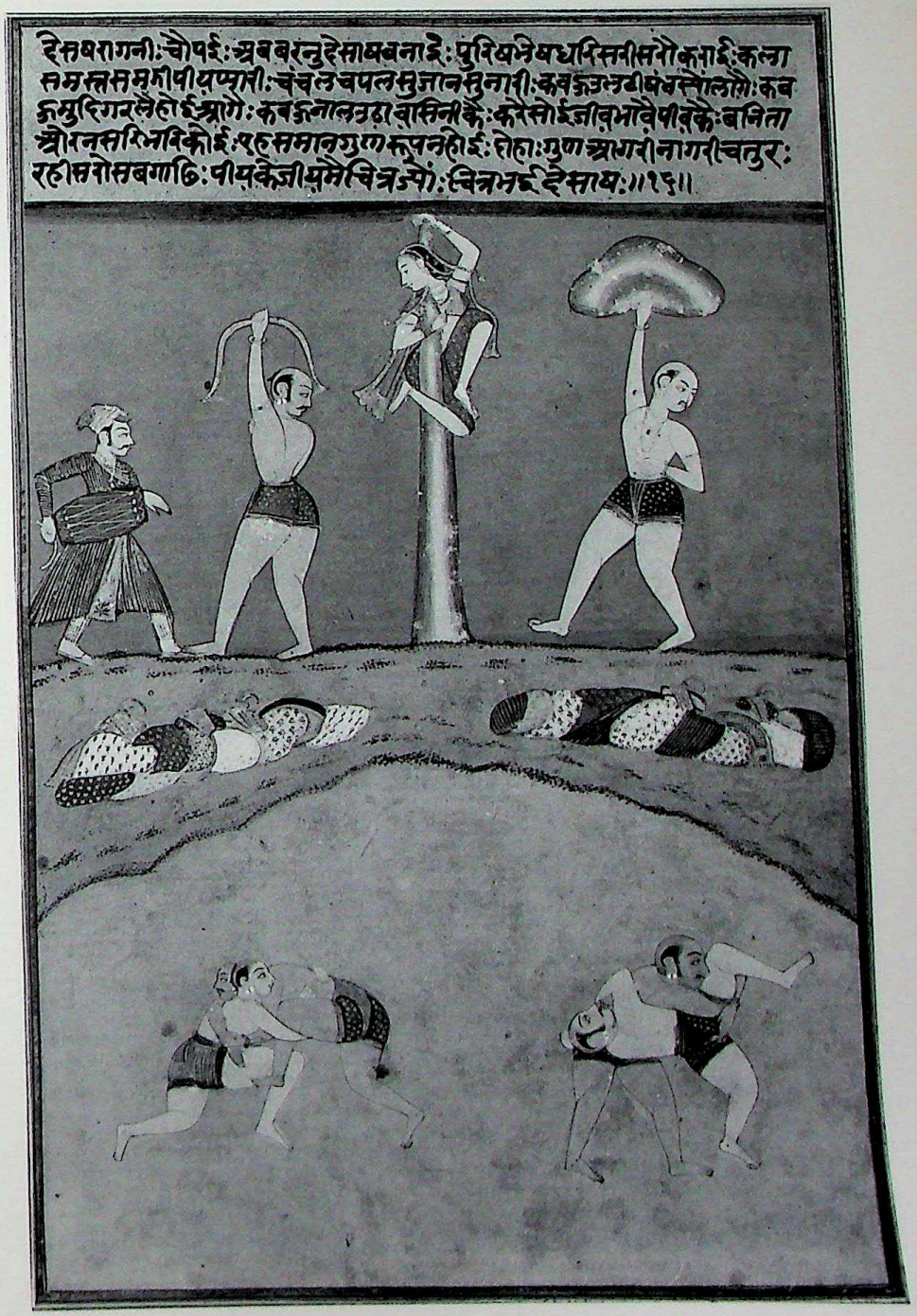
Just as men, even women are occasionally portrayed in miniatures while practising some sports and gymnastics. The exercise shown here is typical of this *rāgiṇī*: through it the heroine or hero (see fig. 80) wishes to show her/his physical hence sexual superiority over rivals by climbing a smooth pole and then coming down headlong.

The *rāgiṇī* wants to conjure up the passion of the heroine, who does not hesitate to undergo hard tests in order to win her lover.

The miniature shows other physical exercises and sports: wrestling, bow-shooting, weight-lifting.

The inscription contains a stanza referring to this *rāgiṇī*, indicated as « *Deśaṣa rāganīh* ». On the back one can read: *tadapahratī jai (jaiṃ?)*. In music this is interpreted early in the morning, in springtime.

For another illustration of that *rāgiṇī* see *In the Image of Men* (catalogue 1982), fig. 165 (Bundi, 1720-30).



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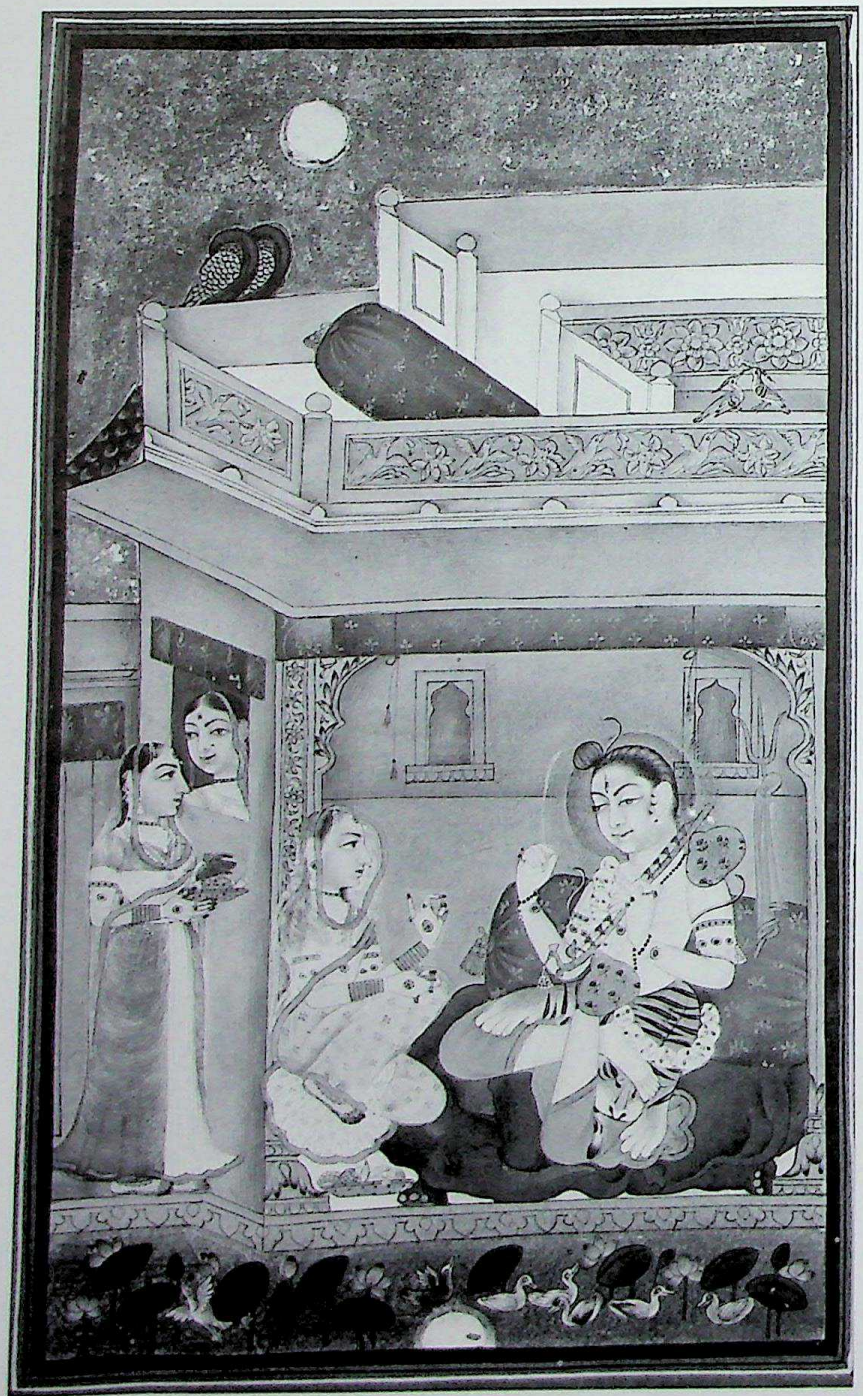

63. DEVOTIONAL SCENE: BHAIRAVA RĀGA

Bundi, end of the 18th century
Gouache, *18.5 x 11.5 cm*
Rietberg Museum, Zürich, 827

Religious practices, the visit to a temple and the meeting with some *guru* were among the few occasions allowing princesses to leave their palace. They were carried in palanquins closed with thick curtains, and they were accompanied by maid-servants and attendants.

This miniature, showing a devotional scene, forms part of a series of *rāgas*; on this occasion, the god assumes the human aspect and likeness of an ascetic, who is addressed by some *rāgiṇīs*. Śiva is seated in the « lotus » posture in a pretty pavilion next to a stream and is engaged in amiable conversation with a *rāgiṇī* of his family sitting in front of him, while others are arriving, bringing a tray. He is dressed, as usual, with a tiger-skin and wears a necklace of skulls. Bhairava means « the Terrible One » and indicates the terrifying aspect of the god; some little snakes surround his arms and the *chignon* of his head, whence the goddess Gaṅgā, namely the Ganges, springs forth; he holds a *vīṇā*; his symbol, the trident (*triśūla*), ornamented with a white cloth, leans against the wall next to a graceful niche. The curtains of the pavilion are raised, rolled up and tied with two strings.

Two little birds and two peacocks rest on the terrace, with a balustrade decorated with birds and flower motifs; above, in the sky, the moon appears, reflected in the stream below, which is crowded with birds and lotus flowers.

As explained by the text referring to it, this *rāga* is meant to conjure up the joy of the god (A.L. Dallapiccola [1977], p. 11). In music it is played before sunrise, in autumn.

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64. SAINDHAVĪ RĀGIṆĪ

Sawar (Ajmer), 18th century
Gouache, *21.8 x 18 cm.*
Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, MIK I 5705

A. Werke (1971), No. 217, fig. 35;
E. and R.L. Waldschmidt (1975), II, pp. 459-460, fig. 118.

A woman assisted by two maidservants, handing her the ceremonial items, kneels in front of a *liṅgam* placed on a simple country altar and is making the usual offerings of flowers and food; the image of the bull Nandī, Śiva's mount, is on another little stand, next to the former.

The women wear long skirts; the two on the right wear rich ornaments and a transparent veil covering them completely, whereas the one on the left is wrapped in a shawl.

It is interesting to note the contrast meant by the artist – typical of this school – between the subtle refinement with which the figures are painted (one should notice the transparency of the veils and the delicacy of the ornaments) and the cursory representation of the natural environment, indicated only by two very stylized trees, a banana-tree and a mango, by a stream in the lower section, with flowers and lotus-leaves also cursorily rendered, and by a stripe of sky where two small cranes fly.

The longing for the far-away lover is expressed in this *rāgiṇī* through a feeling of devotion which brings the maiden to perform holy ceremonies in order to draw the attention of the god. The inscription at the back reads: *Mahādevajī kī pūjā*,namely the *pūjā* of Mahādevajī (Lord Śiva).

In music the *Saindhavī Rāgiṇī* (*Saindhavī* means « she who comes from the Sindh » and belongs to Bhairava's family) is interpreted in the end of the day, in autumn.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

65. RELIGIOUS DEVOTIONS

Bundi or Uniara, c. 1770
Gouache, *22 x 16 cm.; 27 x 22 cm. with border*
Private collection, Ludwigshafen

Six richly adorned young ladies have left their palace to go to a country shrine dedicated to Śiva in his phallic form (*liṅgam*) in order to pray, meditate and make ritual offerings (*pūjā*). The lady on the left is absorbed in meditation, with a detached, even though slightly melancholic look. She holds the rosary in one hand and wears rich jewels on her neck and arms. The young lady in front of her bears a *vīṇā* on her shoulders and holds a branch of *tul'sī* (basil). The two maidens in the foreground seem to be talking excitedly, possibly commenting on a sacred text; a third one on the right is meditating, too, with her knees drawn up and held together by a sash (*yogapaṭṭā*) used to keep yoga postures. Another woman appears adorning the *liṅgam* with garlands of flowers inside the shrine. On the floor there are some vessels and a large water jug supporting a smaller one, which is in turn covered with a thin veil. A lake with a small boat may be seen in the distance; the sky is clouding over, a forecast of rain. A very similar miniature, with a few variations in composition, has been published by A. Topsfield (1980), fig. 32 (Bundi or Uniara, late 18th century). On the Uniara school, cf. M.C. Beach (1974), pp. 23-27.

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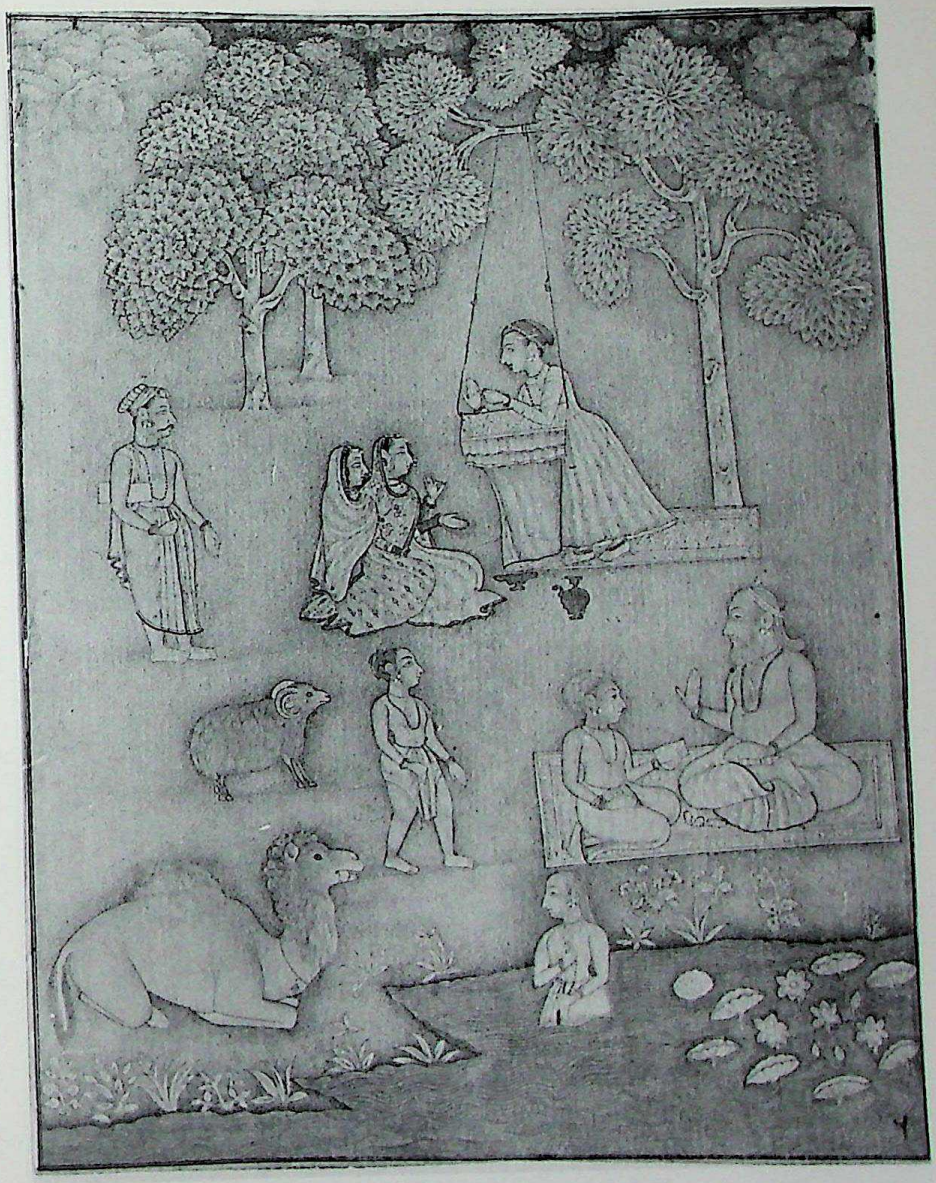
66. ASCETIC NOBLEWOMAN

Bundi or Udaipur, early 18th century
Drawing, 22 x 17 cm.
Private collection, Rome



Just as men, also women could follow the «path of asceticism» and relinquish everything to go to a solitary spot in order to follow the teachings of some *guru*.

In the scene depicted here, a holy man, sitting on a carpet by a river, talks to two youths, possibly shepherds, as suggested by the presence of the dromedary and of the billy-goat; a young woman is making ablutions in the river, full of lotus flowers. In the background, underneath a tree, a noblewoman – judging from her clothes –, possibly a disciple of the holy man, addresses her words to two women and to a man who is arriving. The ascetic is standing, on a carpet, too, perhaps the gift of some followers as a token of their respect and consideration, and leans on a sort of swing covered with a cloth, which is used by ascetics in order to hold the same posture for a long time, to fulfil some penance or vow (cf. G.N. Sharma [1968], fig. 29; various kinds of penance are shown there; there appears also an ascetic leaning on a swing).

The style of this miniature suggests a provenance from the Udaipur school; in particular the figure above, on the left, shows iconographic and stylistic features which are characteristic of the period of Amar Singh II, towards 1710-20: in fact it is slightly reminiscent of the king himself. On the contrary, other features, such as the foliage, suggest a connection with the painting of Bundi.

A miniature depicting the same subject, with a few variations, was published by A. L. Dallapiccola (1978), No. 22 (Bundi, mid-18th century).

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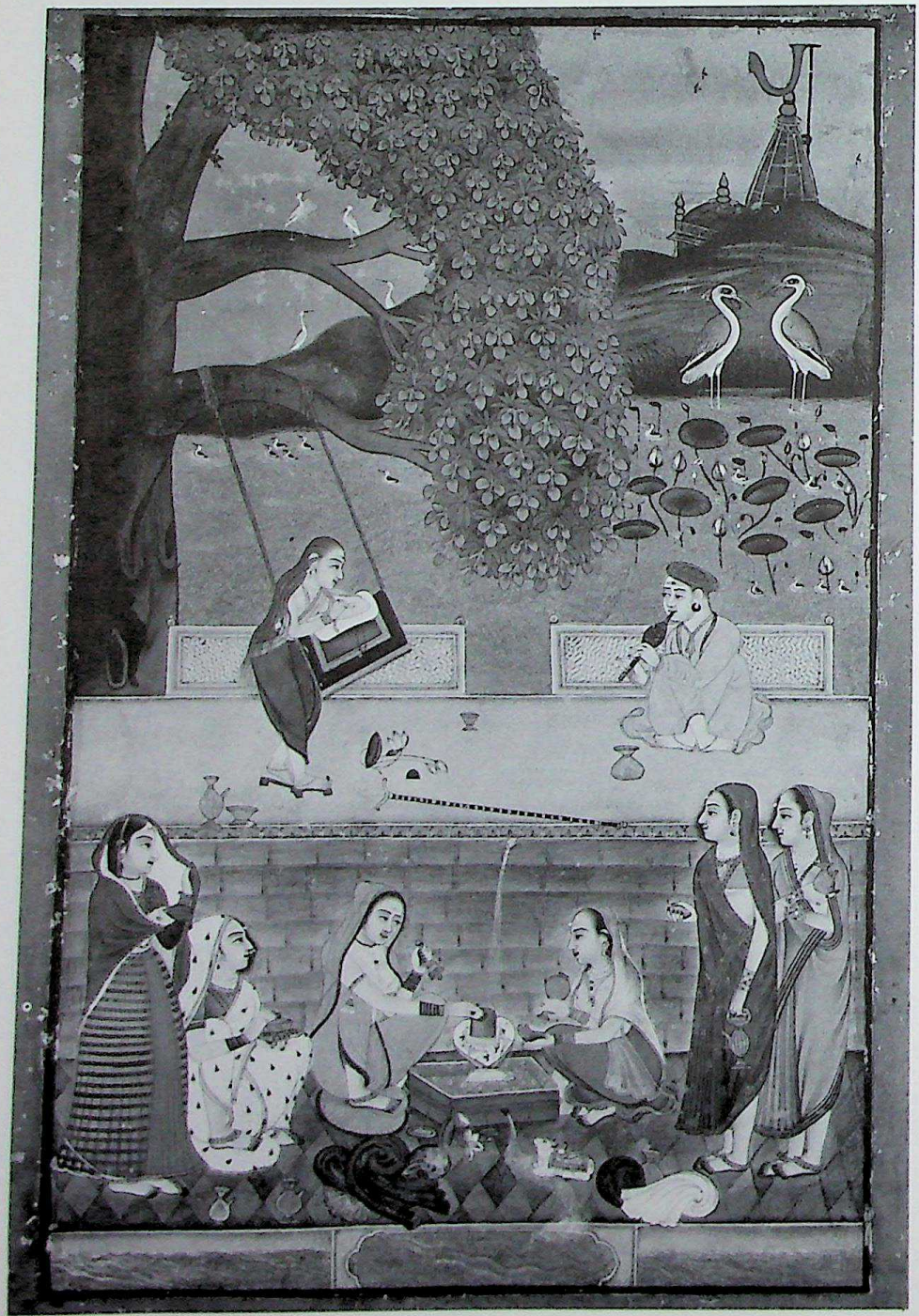

67. MYSTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES

Bundi, c. 1769
Gouache, *27.8 x 17.8 cm; 38 x 28.6 cm. with border*
Private collection, Ludwigshafen

A young *sādhvī* with loose hair, wearing a plain *dhotī* covering her sides and legs, a thin bodice and clogs on her feet, leans on a swing hanging from a big tree which, as mentioned above (fig. 66), is meant to help ascetics to keep the same posture; the stick on the ground, next to her feet, performs the same function.

She looks at another woman, who plays a wind instrument, sitting on the floor of the terrace where the scene takes place.

In the scene below, six women around a *liṅgam* are intent on performing some holy ceremonies; the two in the middle seem to be bathing a *liṅgam*, on which a jet of water falls, coming out of a little canal, above; the water which is collected in the stand of the *liṅgam* then flows out of it into a little basin.

A woman holds the bell whose sound draws the attention of the god, the others bear offerings. Two shawls have been left on the floor next to a small image of the bull Nandī.

In the lake, full of lotus flowers, there are two cranes and a few small ducks; the tower and roof of a temple dedicated to Śiva appear in the background.

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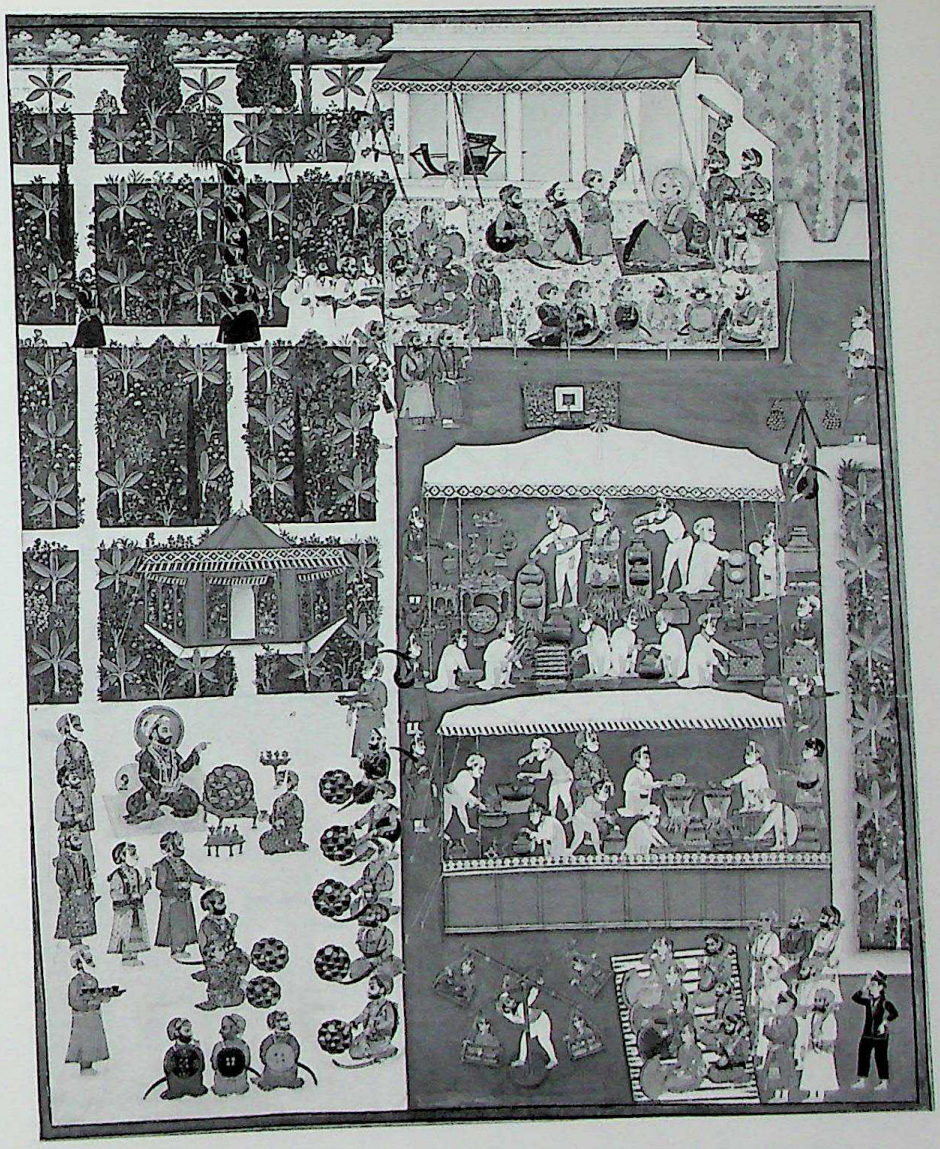
68. MAHĀRĀṆĀ SARUP SINGH (1842-1861) AT A PICNIC IN THE GOVARDHAN VILAS GARDEN

Udaipur, 1859. Attributed to Tara.
Gouache, *69 x 56 cm.*
Private collection

Victoria and Albert Museum (1982), no. 157; A. Topsfield (1982), fig. 9.



The Mahārāṇā, with green and gold nimbus, is seen twice, taking a meal and seated with his entourage at the Govardhan Vilas garden. Above, wearing a red *jāma*, he sits with his nobles on a carpet spread outside a small pavilion. His young nephew Shambhu Singh (who succeeded him as a ruler two years later) stands in front of him with a fan of peacock feathers (*morchhal*). The other seated nobles include Rāo Bakhat Singh of Bedla and Rājā Fateh Singh facing the Mahārāṇā, and, to the right, Rāo Lakshman Singh, Rāvat Khuman Singh, Dal Singh, Surat Singh and Shambhu Singh (again). Within the pavilion behind them is a painted palanquin, very similar to one which is still preserved in the City Palace Museum at Udaipur. Attendants, concubines and musicians are also present.

Below, the Mahārāṇā, in a blue *jāma*, is seen taking a meal on a terrace adjoining the garden, with its rectangular beds of plantains, other fruit trees, cypresses and flowering shrubs. The Mahārāṇā eats from gold vessels and is waited on by Shambu Singh; his nobles eat from simpler leaf plates. Under two canopies nearby the cooks are preparing bread, kebabs and sweet *jalebīs*; they and the attendants wear protective masks over their faces. Other attendants and musicians are seen in the foreground and the ladies enjoy a ride in a ferris wheel.

According to Dev Nath Purohit (1938), p. 39, Mahārāṇā Sarup Singh « erected an enclosure for cows and used to visit it frequently » at Govardhan Vilas, three kilometres south of Udaipur on the Kherwara road. « As the climate suited him he built a palace here and made it his residence in 1855... He used to supervise the feeding of hundreds of cows with sweetmeats of various sorts ». Sarup Singh died at Govardhan Vilas in 1861.

The painting is in the late style of Tara, the leading court painter of Sarup Singh, to whom nos. 37 and 84 can also be attributed. A portrait of him by the travelling English water-colourist William Carpenter is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (A. Topsfield, 1980, pp. 14-15). It shows Tara with his two sons, the elder of whom, Shivalal, also became a prolific artist in the last three decades of the 19th century.

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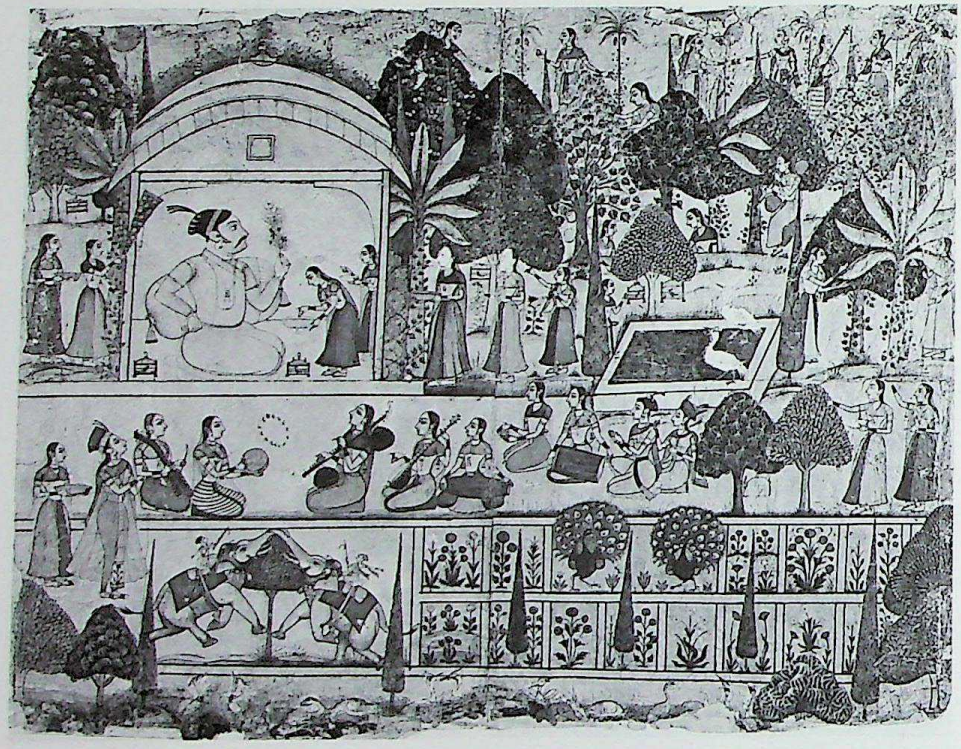


69. THE MAHĀRĀJĀ RAJ SINGH OF SAWAR IN A GARDEN

Sawar (Ajmer), 18th century
Gouache, *47 x 61.5 cm.*
Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, MIK I 5674

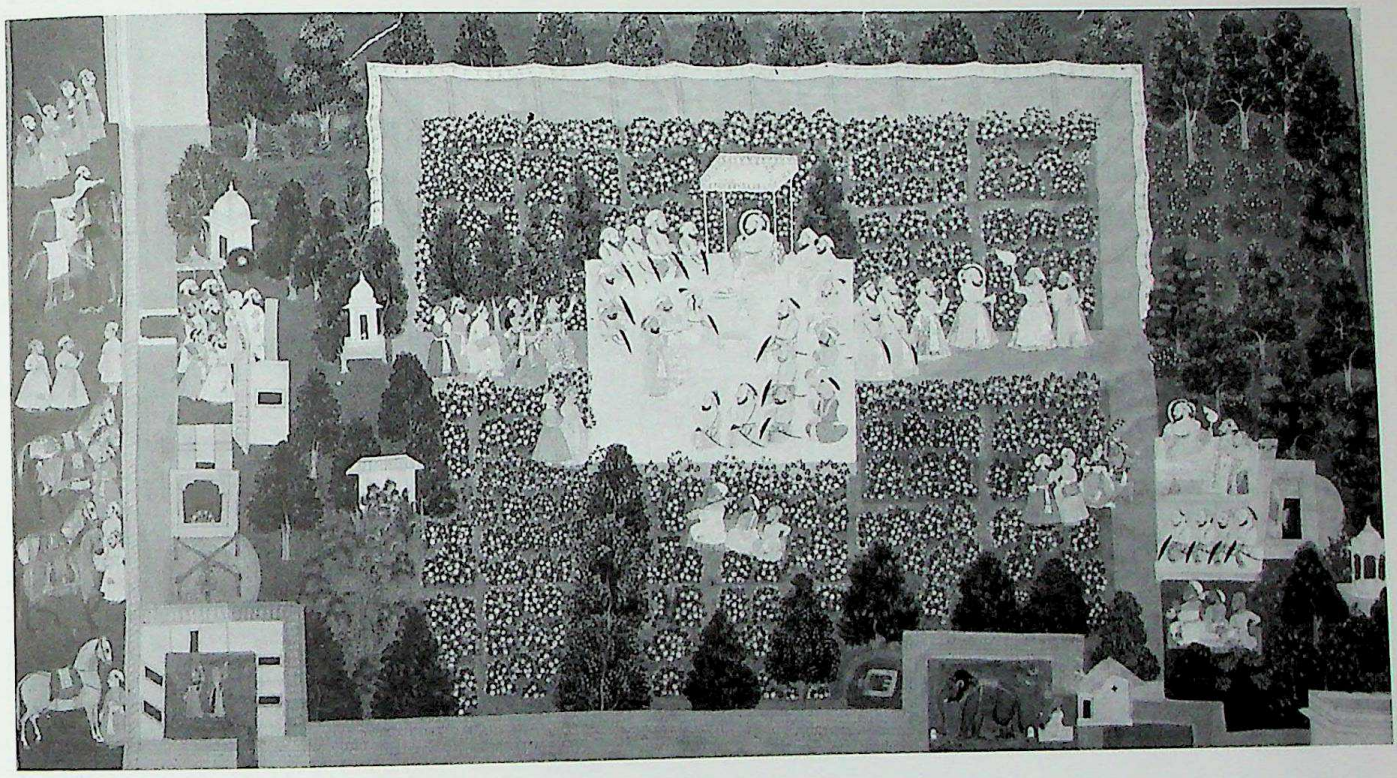
R. Weber (1982), pp. 535-540, fig. 110;
H. Hartel (1964), fig. 35.

This miniature, divided in four registers, shows king Raj Singh of Sawar – as indicated by an inscription on the back (cf. Appendix) – in a garden with different kinds of trees and flowers; surrounded by princesses and maidservants, he spends his time in a leisurely manner, eating, listening to music and to the singing of birds kept in small cages hanging from the trees, and watching a show of fighting elephants.

In the main scene, he sits under an elegant and sober pavilion, leaning against a bolster; his figure stands out unchallenged by the others. A few attendants bring him food, while another fans him with a *mur'chal* from behind. Pretty girls wander among the palms and other trees, plucking fruits, playing blindman's-buff (top left), feeding herons in a small pool, strolling with their *vīṇā* on their shoulders, or holding hands.

Further below an orchestra of women plays various instruments; two courtesans sit listening and applauding, while another, standing, looks towards the king; she acts as a link with the lower register, where two elephants, driven by women, are fighting. A few flower-beds with trees are drawn with geometric precision as if seen with a bird's eye-view; two peacocks spread their tails in the middle. A stream crowded with waterfowl flows in the lower section of the miniature.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)



70. MAHĀRĀṆĀ SANGRAM SINGH (1710-1734) CELEBRATES THE SPRING FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS IN THE GULAB BARI GARDEN

Udaipur, c. 1715-20
Gouache, *46 x 85 cm.*
Private collection

Mahārāṇā Sangram Singh, with a gold nimbus, is seen three times: seated under a canopy with his nobles on the central terrace of the Gulab Bari garden, screened by red tent-walls (*qanāts*); then proceeding to the right and seated watching a dance performance at the right of the picture. The rose-beds are in bloom and each of the nobles wears a rose garland. They are probably celebrating the festival of flowers on New Year's day in the spring month of Chaitra, when, according to Tod, « all the fair of the capital, as well as the other sex, repair to the gardens and groves, where parties assemble, regale, and swing, adorned with chaplets of roses, jessamine, or oleander, when the Naulakha gardens may vie with the Tivoli of Paris ». (Tod, II, p. 665; for a later Udaipur painting, dated 1750, showing a similar scene but from a different viewpoint, see Topsfield, 1980, no. 128). The Gulab Bari (« Rose-water Garden »), which was situated on the road to the Chaugan arena, is now part of the Sajjan Niwas park at Udaipur. Its rose-petals were formerly used not only for rose-water but in the making of a fiery liqueur called *gulābī*.

Seated near the Mahārāṇā in the durbar group is his young son Jagat Singh (b. 1709). Facing the Maharana sit Rāo Bakhat Singh, Rathor Pratap Singh, Mahārājā Takhat Singh, Jhala Daulat Singh, Rathor Kishan Das and Tuvar Kishan Singh. The attendants Tulsi Das and Madhya Chand hold fly-whisks (*chaurīs*). Seated adjacent to the Mahārānā are Rāvat Deva Bhanji, Mahārājā Pratap Singh, Ṭhākur Indra Singh, Chauhan Zoravar Singh and Saktavat Shyam Singh. In the row behind them sit Pancholi Raya Chand and others. The musicians Kana, Chada and Piro are seen playing among the rose-beds and again at the right, where the Mahārāṇā is seated with four nobles (Pratap Singh, Takhat Singh, Kishan Singh and Zoravar Singh) watching a male and female dancer as Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā (they are previously seen entering the garden from the left) enact a dance appropriate to the Holī festival, according to the inscription. They are accompanied by a singer and a drummer. At the left of the picture, attendants and groom wait with horses and elephants. In the foreground the royal elephant Pitabar is tethered in an enclosure.

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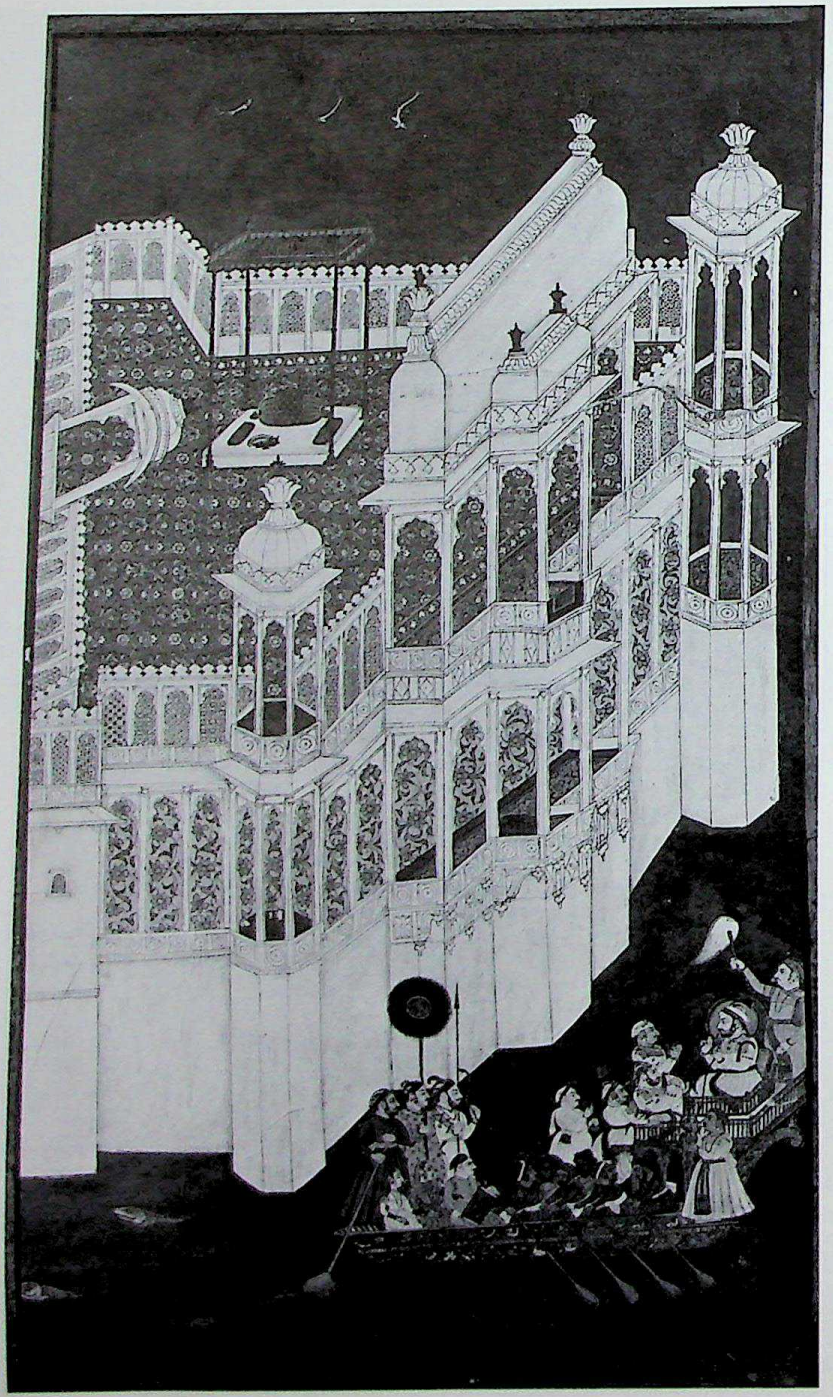

71. MAHĀRĀṆĀ JAGAT SINGH (1734-1751) BOATING ON THE PICHOLA LAKE

Udaipur, c. 1740
Gouache, *52 x 30 cm.*
Private collection

Victoria and Albert Museum (1982), no. 143;
A. Topsfield (1982), fig. 5;
R. Crill (1984), fig. 5.

The Mahārāṇā, with a green and gold nimbus, sits in the prow of a royal barge, which is being rowed by six oarsmen to the beat of a drum past one of the smaller palaces set in the Pichola lake, possibly the Mohan Mandir. The Mahārāṇā holds in one hand the tube of his jewelled *ḥuqqā*, which is held by a servant standing on a platform below, and with the other he makes the gesture of interlocution to the three noblemen standing before him: the middle figure is probably his son Pratap Singh. Other servants fan the Mahārāṇā with a fly-whisk (*chaurī*) and hold a wine-flask and cup. In the rear of the barge two ladies are seated and attendants hold weapons and the *changī* or royal parasol. The entire barge is gilded, with panels of painted decoration depicting lotuses, fish, turtles, crocodiles and waterfowl. In the (oxidised) silver water of the lake crocodiles and fish are swimming. The lake palace is spread with carpets within, and in its courtyard a canopy and formal seat with pillows and a dish of delicacies has been prepared in expectation of the Mahārāṇā's arrival.

The lake palaces of the Pichola were a favourite resort of the Mahārāṇās and their nobles during the hot summer months: in Tod's words, « here they listened to the tale of the bard, and slept off their noonday opiate amidst the cool breezes of the lake, wafting delicious odours from myriads of the lotus-flower which covered the surface of the waters... » (Tod, 1920, I, pp. 433-34).

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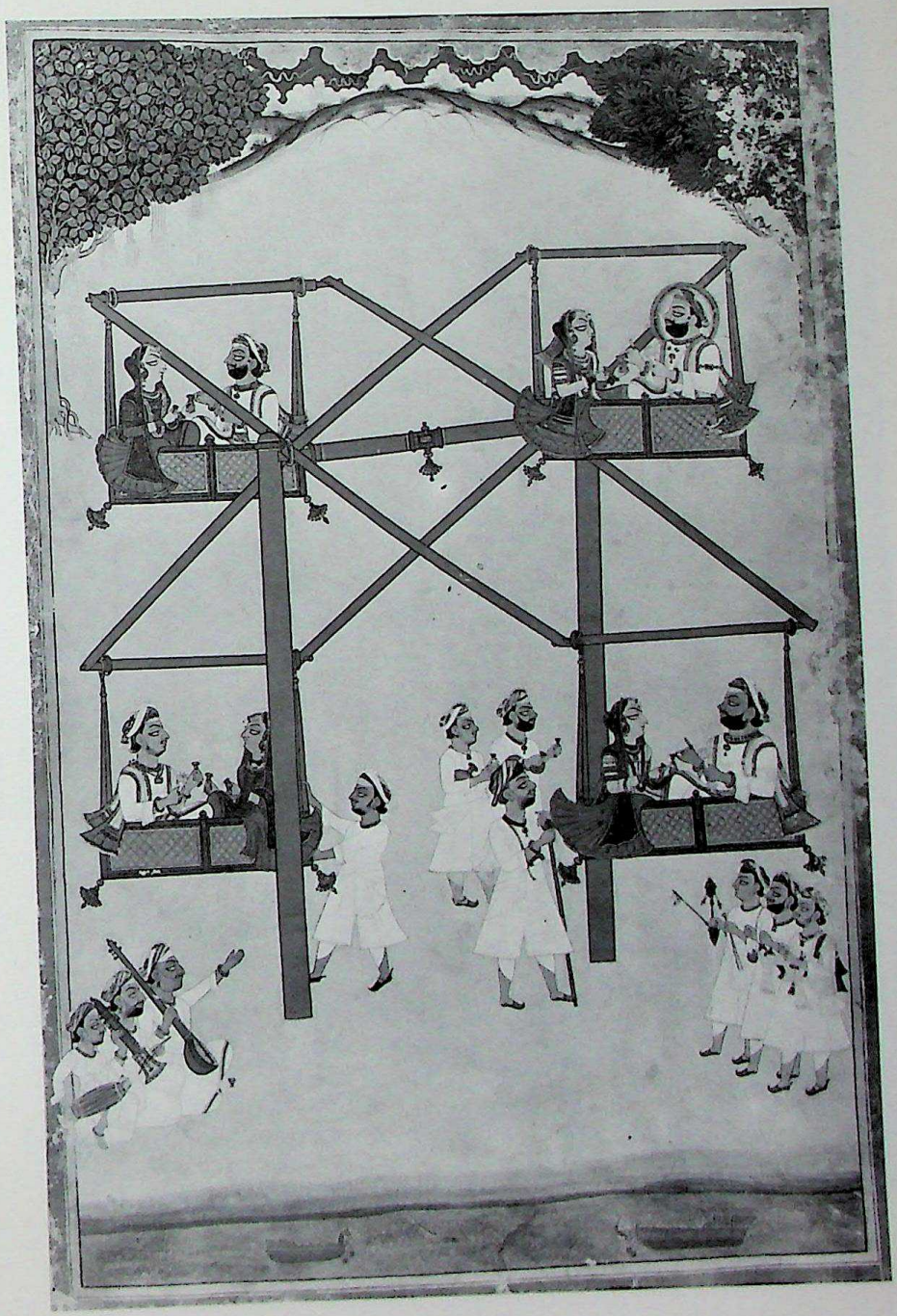
72. THE MAHĀRĀJĀ MAN SINGH OF JODHPUR (1803-1843) ON A MERRY-GO-ROUND

Jodhpur, c. 1830
Gouache, *60 x 39 cm.*
Private collection, London

The Indian Heritage (catalogue 1981), p. 61, fig. 154

The Mahārājā, identified by the halo around his head, sits on a merry-go-round, a sort of revolving machine, together with a woman and three more couples of nobles; they drink wine they are offered by their attendants and listen to the music which is played by six musicians. A boat is moored in a far-away lake.



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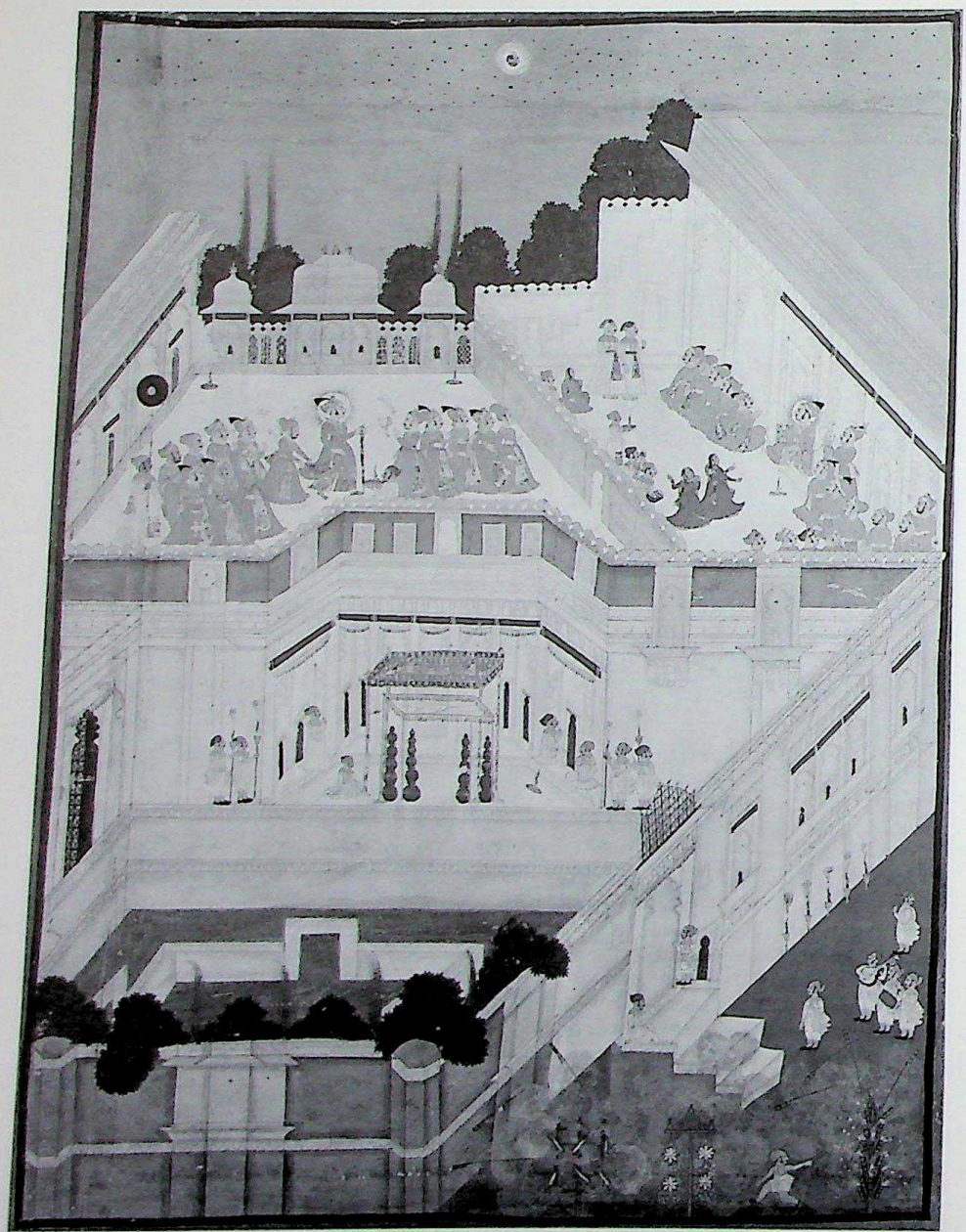

73. MAHĀRĀṆĀ ARI SINGH (1761-1773) AT A NAUTCH PARTY IN THE PALACE

Udaipur, 1764. By Bhima and Kesu Ram
Gouache, *59 x 43.5 cm.*
Private collection

The Mahārāṇā, with gold nimbus, is seen twice in the palace at night, at a celebration on the second day of the bright half of the month of Vaiśākh. He and his nobles wear saffron clothes and gold *paṭkās*, as was the custom at the festival of *Akṣay Tṛtīyā*, « the imperishable Third », which was held on the following day: Shyamaldas (1886), I, p. 123. They are seen proceeding towards a courtyard on the right, where they sit and watch two dancing-girls in crimson dresses. In a courtyard below, the presence of a *pandal*, used in the marriage ceremony and consisting of a canopy on poles with a diminishing stack of clay pots at each corner, suggests that a wedding is to be celebrated. Further below is a tank with (oxidised) silver water, and in the outer courtyard of the palace to the right a firework display is in progress and musicians are playing.

For other works by the artists Bhima and Kesu Ram, see A. Topsfield (1980), nos. 158, 163-63, 166.

A.T.

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74. MAHĀRĀṆĀ JAGAT SINGH (1734-1751) WATCHING A PERFORMANCE OF THE *RĀSALĪLĀ*

Udaipur, 1736.
Gouache, *60.5 x 44.7 cm.*
Private collection

Victoria and Albert Museum Album (1982), fig. 142; A. Topsfield (1982), fig. 4; Id. (1980), figg. 113-14; J. van Lohuizen de Leeuw (1982), fig. 2

The Mahārāṇā, with a gold nimbus, sits with a young boy, Chamanoji, and nobles in a palace courtyard at night, smoking a gold *ḥuqqā* in the form of a woman and watching female dancers perform a *Rāsalīlā* dance drama enacting the youthful exploits of the cowherd god Kṛṣṇa, within a performing area screened by red *qanāts*. A dancer in the role of Kṛṣṇa, with peacock crown and tiered skirt, is seen twice: to the right, supporting Mount Govardhana with his finger to protect the villagers from the storms created by Indra, who is depicted on his elephant on the painted canopy above; to the left, dancing with Rādhā, his favourite cow-girl. Two dancers are shown wearing cow masks. The seated nobles (leading away from the Mahārāṇā) are: Rājā Raghodev, Bābā Takhat Singh, Nathji, Prince Pratap Singh, Baghji, Bakhat Singh, Sardar Singh and Bharath Singh. In the courtyard below, attendants and grooms while away the night hours with music and conversation.

This picture belongs to a series of at least ten very similar paintings showing different scenes of the *Rāsalīlā* being performed before the Mahārāṇā. These were painted by different artists and are all dated 1736.

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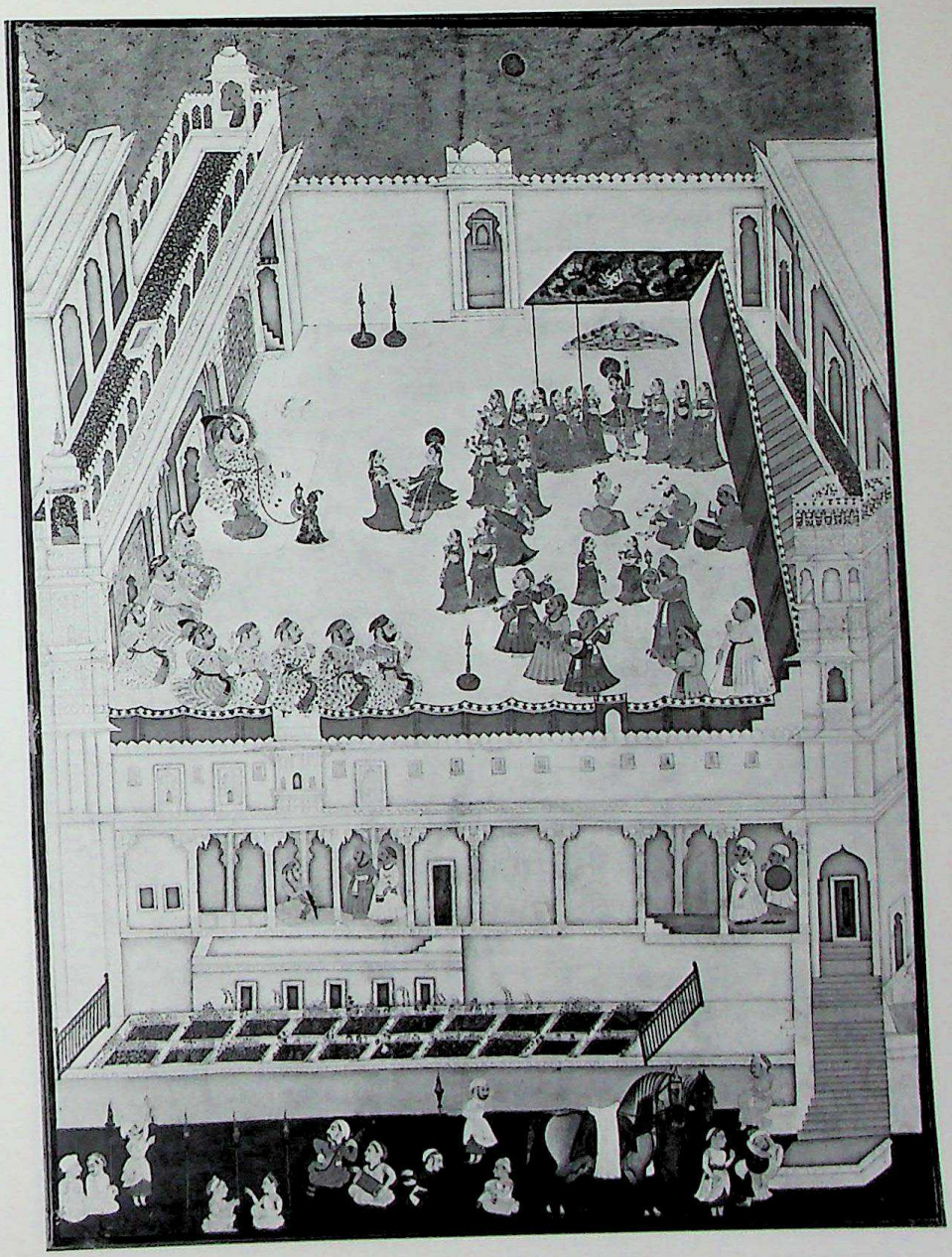

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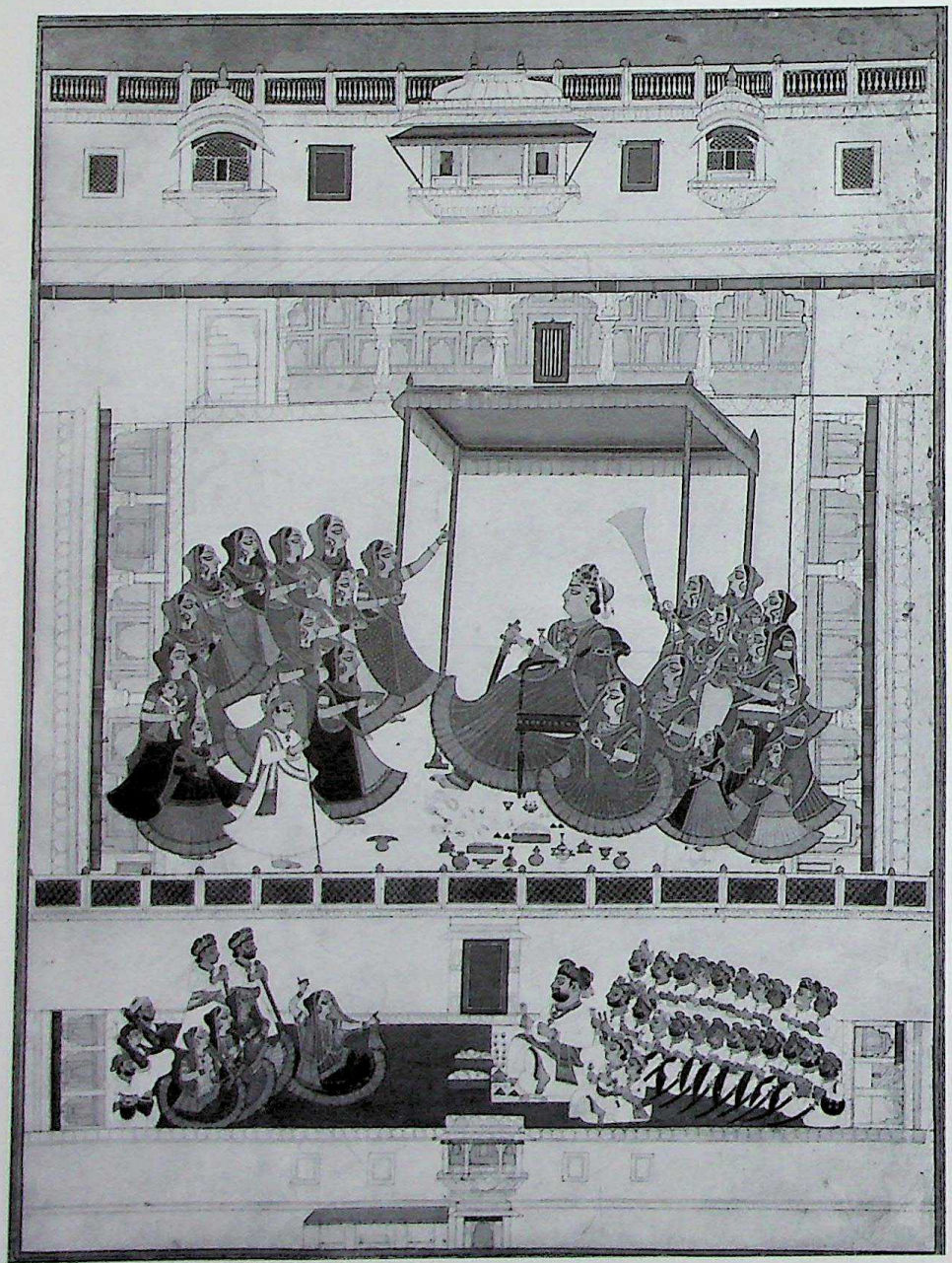

75. COURT PERFORMANCES

Jodhpur, c. 1830
Gouache, *65 x 50.5 cm.*
Rietberg Museum, Zürich, 830

S.C. Welch and M.C. Beach (1965), fig. 83

In the courtyard of his palace a beardless young man sits on an elegant chair under a canopy after the English fashion and watches a show performed by several women, surrounded by his wives or concubines, by two little girls and by attendants; he holds a tumbler in one hand and a sword in the other; tumblers and vessels with food are strewn over the floor.

In a lower courtyard, facing the upper one, a king identified as Man Singh II (1803-43) sits on the floor, also intent on watching a performance of music and dances; he bears a close resemblance to the figure in miniature No. 27, which is indeed described as Man Singh (cf. also J. Soustiel [Catalogue 1973], fig. 102; T. H. Hendley [1897], fig. 17, No. 28). The *rājā* is in the company of two young princes and of several dignitaries bearing swords and shields, the latter sitting in an array of two rows behind his shoulders. The youth in the centre seems to be the same appearing in the upper part of the miniature, possibly the heir, and is very similar to the young man portrayed in miniature No. 27.

It is interesting to note how the arcades in the courtyard have been drawn lying on their back in a « flat » perspective so as to be entirely visible.

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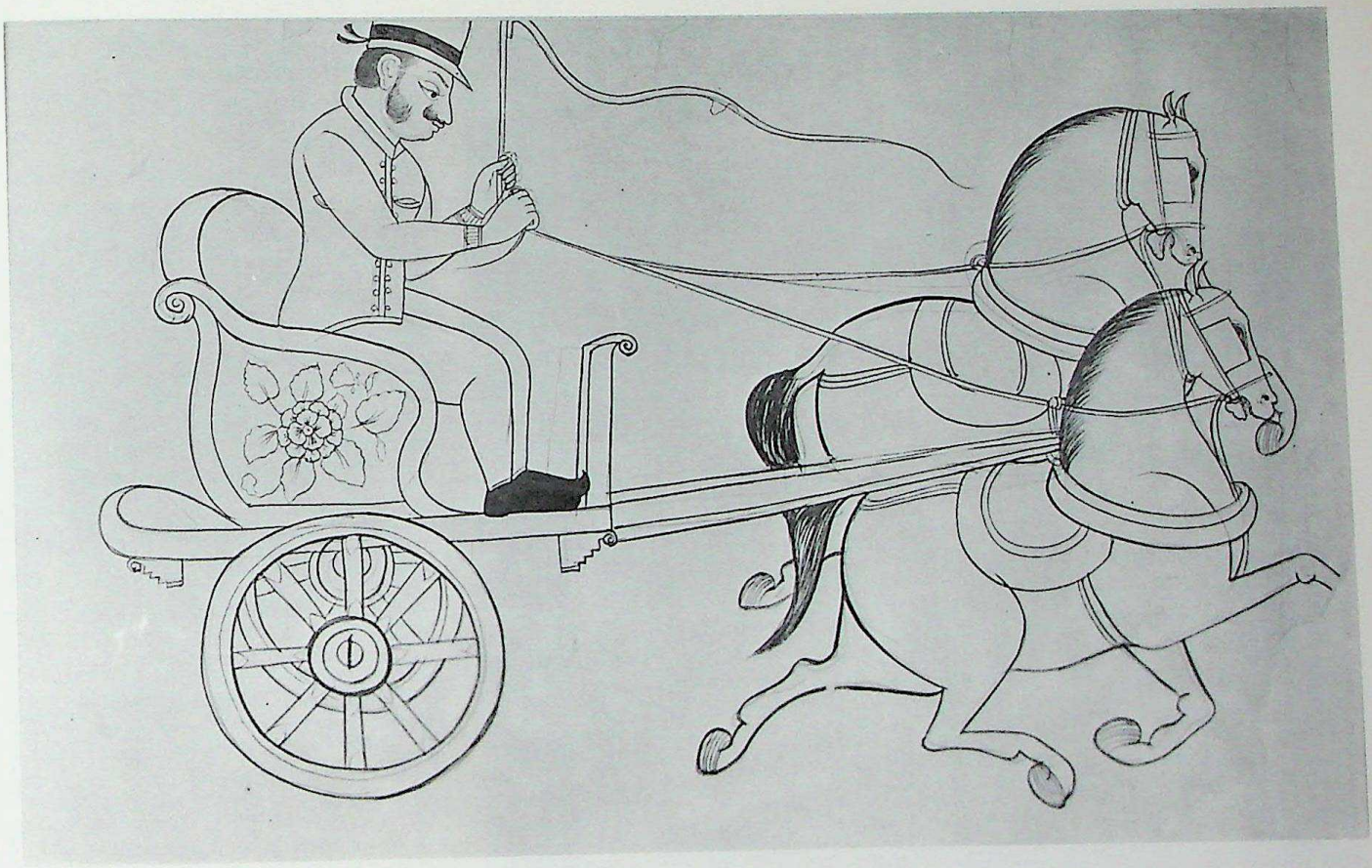

76. EUROPEAN GIG

Kotah, c. 1860
Drawing, 20 x 26 cm.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS 86 - 1955

Western « fashion », understood as a curiosity, spread in the 19th century to provincial courts, where rulers welcomed passing foreigners with great generosity and also in their own interest, as related in their travel accounts.

Just as at the time of the Moghul emperors *rājās* had imitated their life style, after the British intervention peripheral kingdoms and also lesser estates particularly appreciated the comforts of life offered by the new culture, rather than clothing items – Indians are very traditional with regards to those. They furnished their dwellings with European furniture, ornaments and furnishings, blending various elements with a typically Indian taste and thus originating an altogether new kind of furnishing, which has not yet been adequately taken into account by scholars.

Western carriages roused unanimous consent, as may be gathered from those still visible in the palaces of the *rājās*.

This drawing shows a gig drawn by a pair of horses, driven by a man wearing European clothing. A small carriage with lowered hood was published by M.C. Beach (1974), fig. 106.

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77. MAHĀRĀṆĀ SANGRAM SINGH (1710-1734) PLAYING DICE WITH HIS NOBLES

Udaipur, c. 1720
Gouache, *31 x 19 cm.*
Private collection

The Mahārāṇā, seated against a bolster and wearing a white *jāma* and turban, sits playing dice (*juvā*) with cowrie shells in a palace room with his nobles, Rāo Khandalji of Bedla, Rāo Pratap Singh of Paloli (?), Mahārājā Sundar Singh, Rāo Kesri Singh of Salumber and the minister Dip Chand. The attendant Tulsi Das fans the Mahārāṇā with a fly-whisk. In front of each player is a heap of gold and other coins; the Maharana has a larger pile of gold than the others. A small arm-support also lies in front of him. He has cast the sixteen cowries, so that nine lie with mouths facing upwards and seven facing downwards. A simple gambling game is probably being played, in which the players lay bets before each throw on the number of cowries that will fall facing upwards (cf. R.C. Bell, 1979, vol. 2, pp. 81-83).

Mahārāṇā Sangram Singh clearly enjoyed games of all kinds. For a painting showing him playing cards, see A. Topsfield (1980), no. 73 and R. von Leyden (1982), cover illustration.

A.T.

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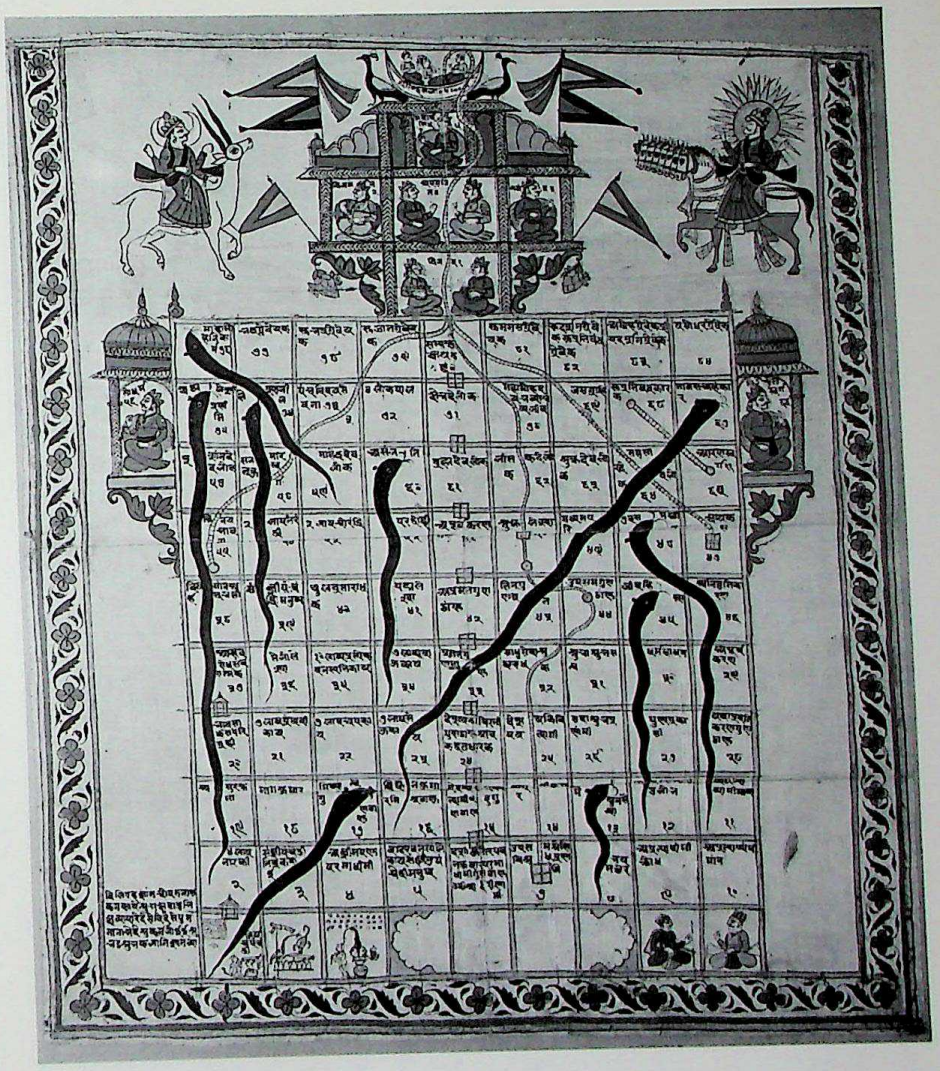
78. A GAME OF *GYĀN CŌPAṚ* (SNAKES AND LADDERS)

Southern Rajasthan, late 19th century
Gouache *on cloth, 58.5 x 52 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum,
Circ. 324-1972

Published: A. Topsfield (forthcoming)



Among the board games which were popular at the Rajput courts in the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly with the ladies of the *zenānā*, was the quasi-religious game of *gyān cōpaṛ* or *gyān bāzi* (« the Game of Knowledge »), from which the modern English children's game of Snakes and Ladders derives. *Gyān cōpaṛ* was known in most parts of northern India, in Hindu (Vaiṣṇava), Jain and Muslim versions; a Buddhist form of the game may also have been played at an earlier period. In the game each player's piece makes a kind of Pilgrim's Progress, according to the throw of dice or cowries, from hellish states and wordly vices to higher virtues and heavenly realms, and thus ultimately to the attainment of Liberation or union with God at the highest central squares of the board. On the way, pieces undergo rapid promotion when they encounter ladders, and demotion when they land on snakes' heads. At the Rajput courts the 72-square Vaiṣṇava board, in which the objective is to reach Vaikuṇṭha or the heaven of Viṣṇu, was the most popular form of the game.

The present board is an example of the Jain version of the game which was popular in western India, with 84 numbered squares and an architectural superstrucutre above the main playing area, representing the highest of the numerous heavens described by Jain cosmology. The moon-god Candra and the sun-god Surya appear at either side. To reach these heavenly regions, the players must hope to avoid the snake squares such as « lust » (square 13), « lack of insight » (square 17) and the « blue » and the « black » *leśyās* or defiled states of the soul (squares 74, 75). The final snake is *mohanīya karma*, the residual *karmas* which make the soul vulnerable to desire and confusion. In Jain doctrine, such karmic impediments must be removed by *upaśama* (« suppression », ladder squares 7 and 44) or *kṣaya* (« obliteration », ladder square 47).

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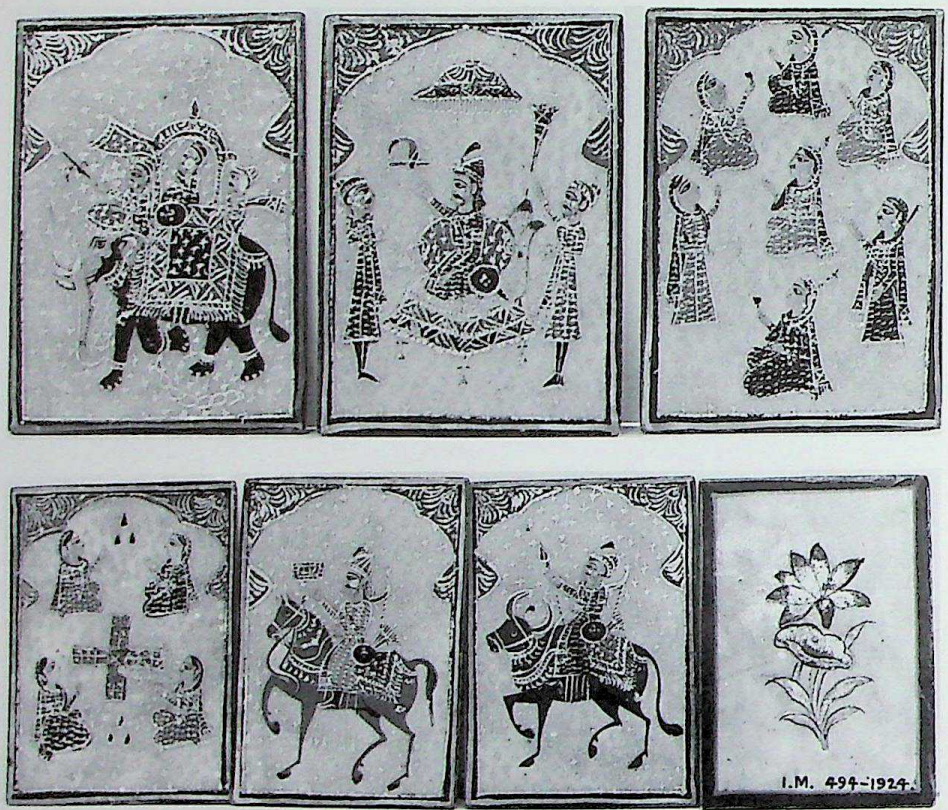

79. SIX PLAYING CARDS, FROM A MUGHAL *GAÑJĪFĀ* PACK OF 96 CARDS

Rajasthan, 19th century
Ivory, painted and varnished; each card 6 x 4.2 cm.
Victoria and Albert Museum,
I.M. 494-1924

R. von Leyden (1982), pp. 64-65

The earliest recorded use of playing cards (*gañjīfā*) in India is in the 16th century at the courts of the first Mughal emperors, Babur and Humayun, who, like their contemporaries in Iran and Central Asia, found it a congenial pastime. Their successor, Akbar, himself helped to revise the composition of the *gañjīfā* pack in use at his court. By the 18th century card games had become popular with the nobility and common people in many parts of India, and not least in Rajasthan. The two most usual forms of the pack were the standard Mughal *gañjīfā* of 96 cards (8 suits of 12 cards) and the Hindu *daśāvatāra gañjīfā* of 120 cards (10 suits, corresponding to the avatars of Viṣṇu, of 12 cards).

The names of the suits of the Mughal *gañjīfā* pack are: *tāj* (crown), *safed* (silver coin), *śamśer* (sword), *gulām* (servant), *chang* (harp), *surkh* (gold coin), *barāt* (document) and *qimāsh* (pillow); these symbols corresponded very loosely with the different royal departments of state. Each suit has two court cards, the *mīr* and *wazīr* (ruler and minister), and ten numeral cards.

These six cards from a Mughal *gañjīfā* pack are of court quality, although not very finely painted. On each card the figures or symbols are painted in a restricted range of colours on a plain ivory ground speckled with gold and framed within a cusped Mughal arch. A floral device appears on the back of each card. The cards are, in their normal suit order:
1. *Gulām mīr* (?): a ruler riding in the howdah of an elephant; 2. *Gulām wazīr* (?): a minister riding a bullock; 3. *Gulām 7*: seven ladies drinking and conversing; 4. *Gulām 4*: four ladies playing a game of *cōpaṛ*; 5. *Chang mīr*: a ruler seated on a throne, holding a harp; 6. *Barāt wazīr*: a minister on horseback, holding a rectangular document.

A.T.

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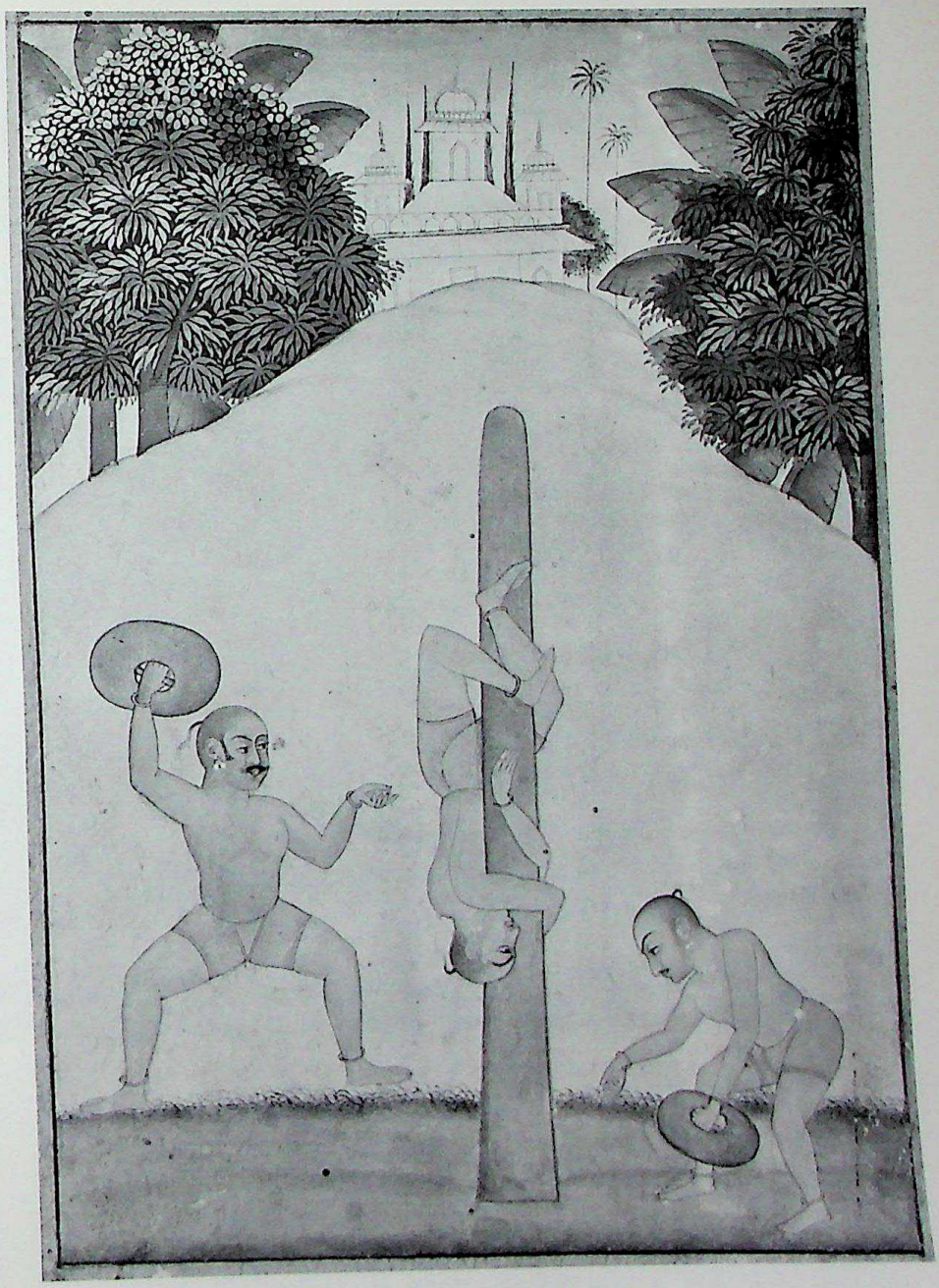
80. DEŚĀKHYA RĀGA

Bikaner, c. 1720
Gouache, *14 x 9.5 cm.*
Private collection, Zürich

It was customary all over India training young princes and nobles in several sports and athletic exercises (29 in number, according to tradition), through which they could show their skill, dexterity and courage, besides physical strength. Sporting contests were rather frequently organized in courts, and even the king with the entire court willingly watched them.

The miniature depicts two athletic tests performed by three half-naked men: the exercise of the pole and weight-lifting. As mentioned above (fig. 62), the *Deśākhya Rāga* is meant to conjure up love passion through the display of physical strength; the man or woman in love shows her athletic gifts to conquer the beloved. We should remember that in many legends or tales also in our own culture the bridegroom of the princess is chosen only after passing difficult tests of strength and dexterity.

A very similar iconography to the miniature shown here is found in E. and R.L. Waldschmidt (1975), figs. 30, 31 and 33.



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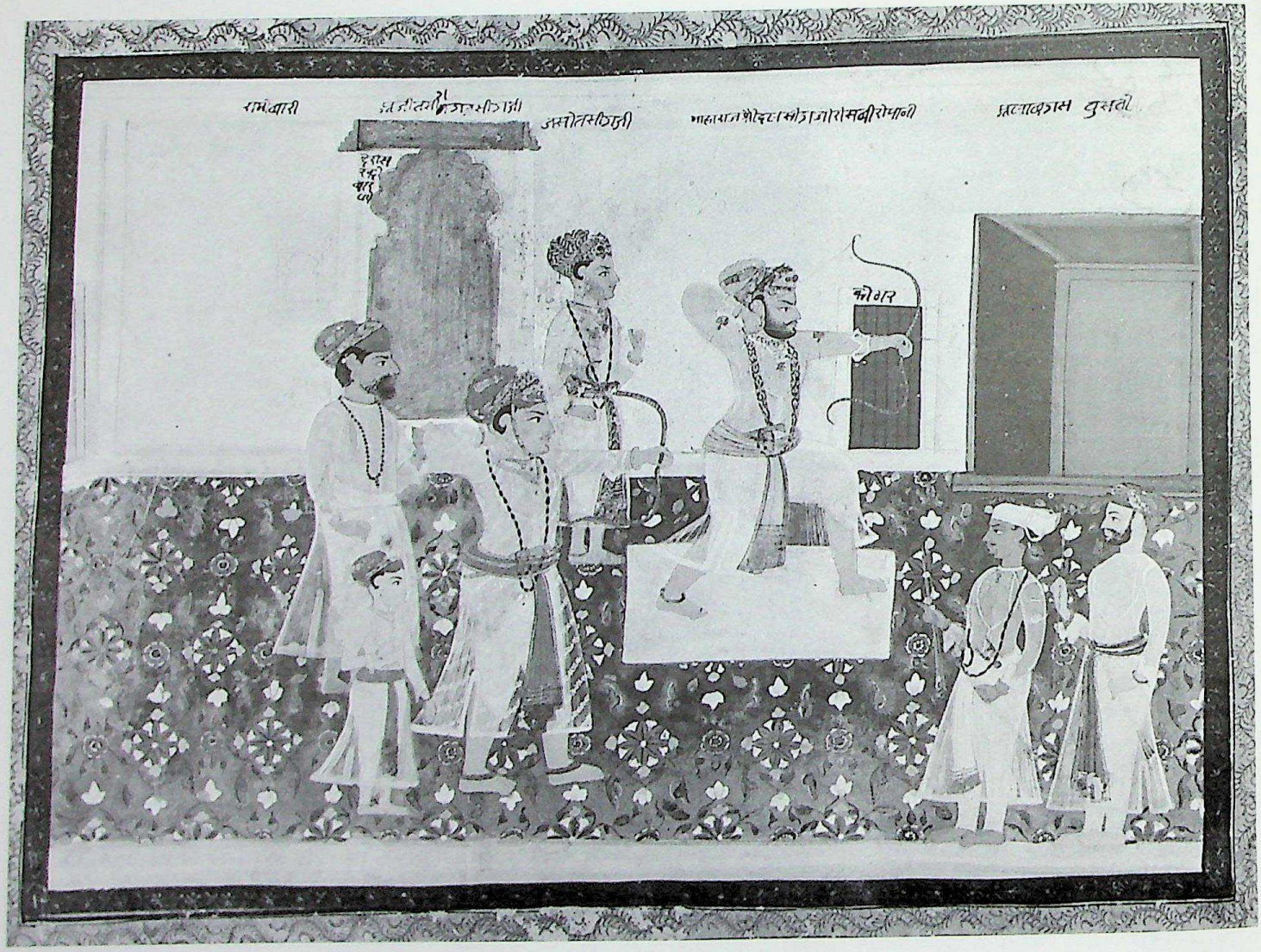

81. THE MAHĀRĀJĀ ŚRĪ DAL SINGH OF SITAMAU PRACTISING ARCHERY

Sitamau, mid-19th century
Gouache, *24 x 34 cm.; 30 x 40 cm. with border*
Private collection, Rome

The *rājās* of Sitamau, a small *ṭhikānā* bordering with the state of Gwalior, descend from the Rathor clan (cf. E. Luard, 1908). In this miniature the king, indicated by the inscription as the Mahārājā Śrī Dal Singh (Shardul Singh? 1899-1900) is portrayed possibly in a gymnasium with a carpet decorated with flowers and geometric patterns, while practising archery together with a nobleman. He is assisted by four more dignitaries and courtiers, whose names are, from left to right: Ajit Singh, Gaj Singh, Jasot Singh, Alabagas and Vusato. The child on the left, by name Ramo Bari, might be prince Ram Singh, who was the eighth ruler in this little kingdom, the grandchild of Shardul Singh, who adopted him for succession.

The small door on the right is indicated as a store-room, *koṭhār*, while that on the left, adorned with a polilobe arch, possibly leads into the audience room; the word *darās*, which might stand for *darśan*, appears in the inscription, which is difficult to read.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

82. MAHĀRĀṆĀ SANGRAM SINGH (1710-1734) PRACTISING ARCHERY IN HIS CAMP BY THE UDAI SAGAR LAKE

Udaipur, 1720
Gouache, *48.5 x 75.5 cm.*
Private collection

Victoria and Albert Museum Album (1982), fig. 141; A. Topsfield (1982), fig. 3.
For later versions of this composition by Udaipur artists, see A. Topsfield (1980), no. 129; O.P. Sharma (1974), fig. 35.

The Mahārāṇā, with gold nimbus, is seen twice in his camp on the bund (embankment) of the Udai Sagar lake, about ten kilometers from Udaipur, during the rainy season of 1720. He is shown firing arrows at water-fowl and at a water-buffalo in the fast-flowing stream to the left of the picture. On the lakeside terrace, he is attended by the nobles Umed Singh, Nathji, Rathor Kishan Das, Prince Kishan Singh and others (these four are also seated in attendance at the left, where the Mahārāṇā fires at the buffalo). Other attendants stand nearby and one courtier is flying a kite. Cooks and servants prepare a meal and wash the rice by the river below. Grooms look after the tethered horses, camels and elephants.

The Udai Sagar was inaugurated by Mahārāṇā Udai Singh in 1565, and a palace was built there by Mahārāṇā Jagat Singh I (1628-52). The scenery is unchanged today, with the same small temples along the bund and a small palace near the (seasonal) stream in the foreground, which is, according to Tod (1920), II, p. 762, the source of the Berach river, « abounding in trout ».

A.T.

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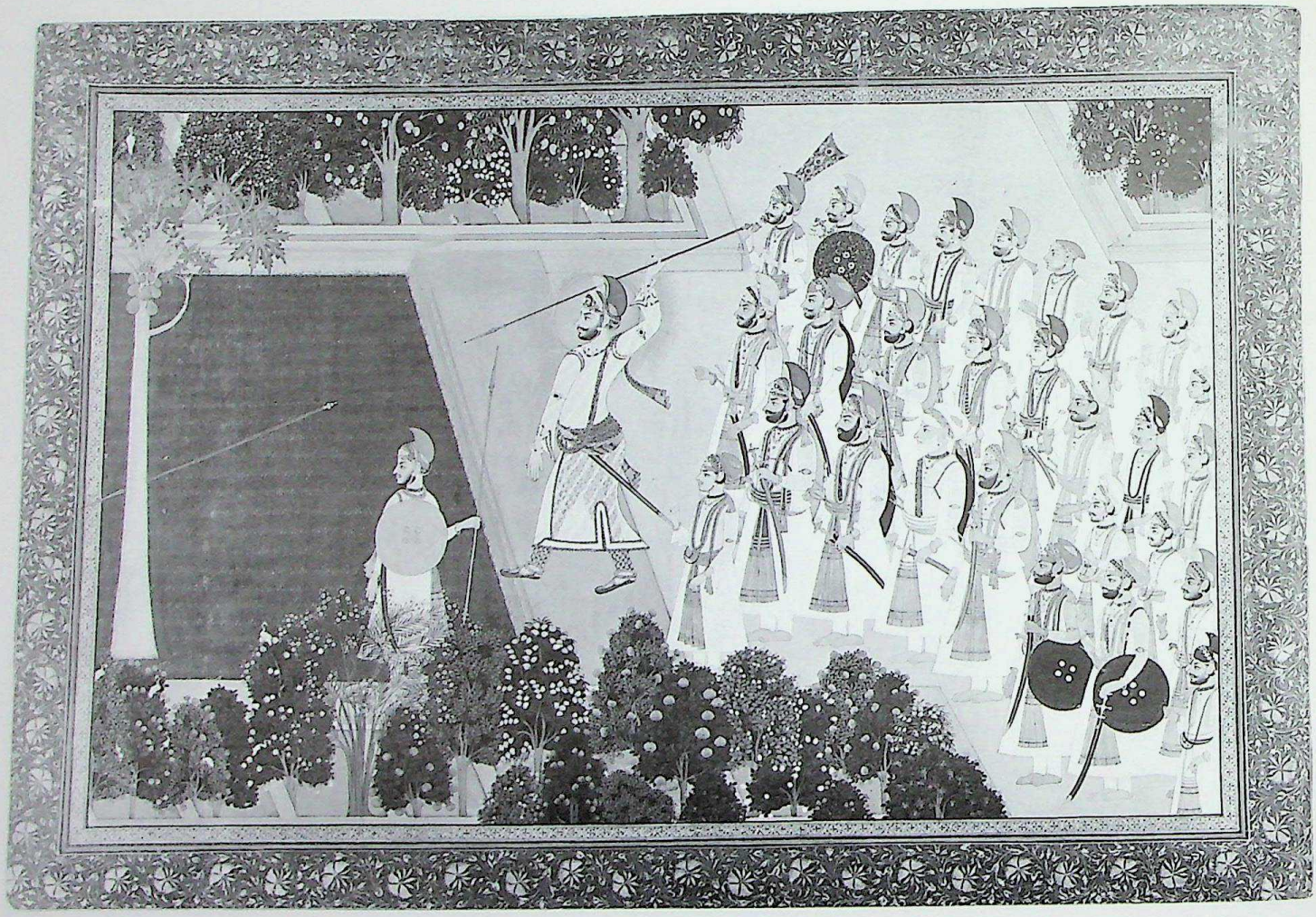

83. MAHĀRĀṆĀ SARUP SINGH (1842-1861) THROWING A SPEAR AT A PAPAYA TREE

Udaipur, c. 1850. Attributed to Tara.
Gouache. *28 x 44 cm.*
Private collection

The Mahārāṇā, with green and gold nimbus and wearing a transparent white *jāma*, demonstrates the strength of his arm by throwing a spear through the trunk of a papaya tree in the garden of Jagmandir island. He is watched by a large group of nobles, ministers and attendants, including Sardar Singh, who stands near the Mahārāṇā holding a spear for his use, Rāvat Isari Singh, Dal Singh, Indra Singh, Khuman Singh, Sadul Singh, Chandji, Devi Singh, Rasaluji, Chauhan Hamirji, Chundavat Samratji and Pancholi Akhe Nath, who holds the peacock feather *morchhal*. In the garden are mango, lemon and other trees, with birds and squirrels among them.

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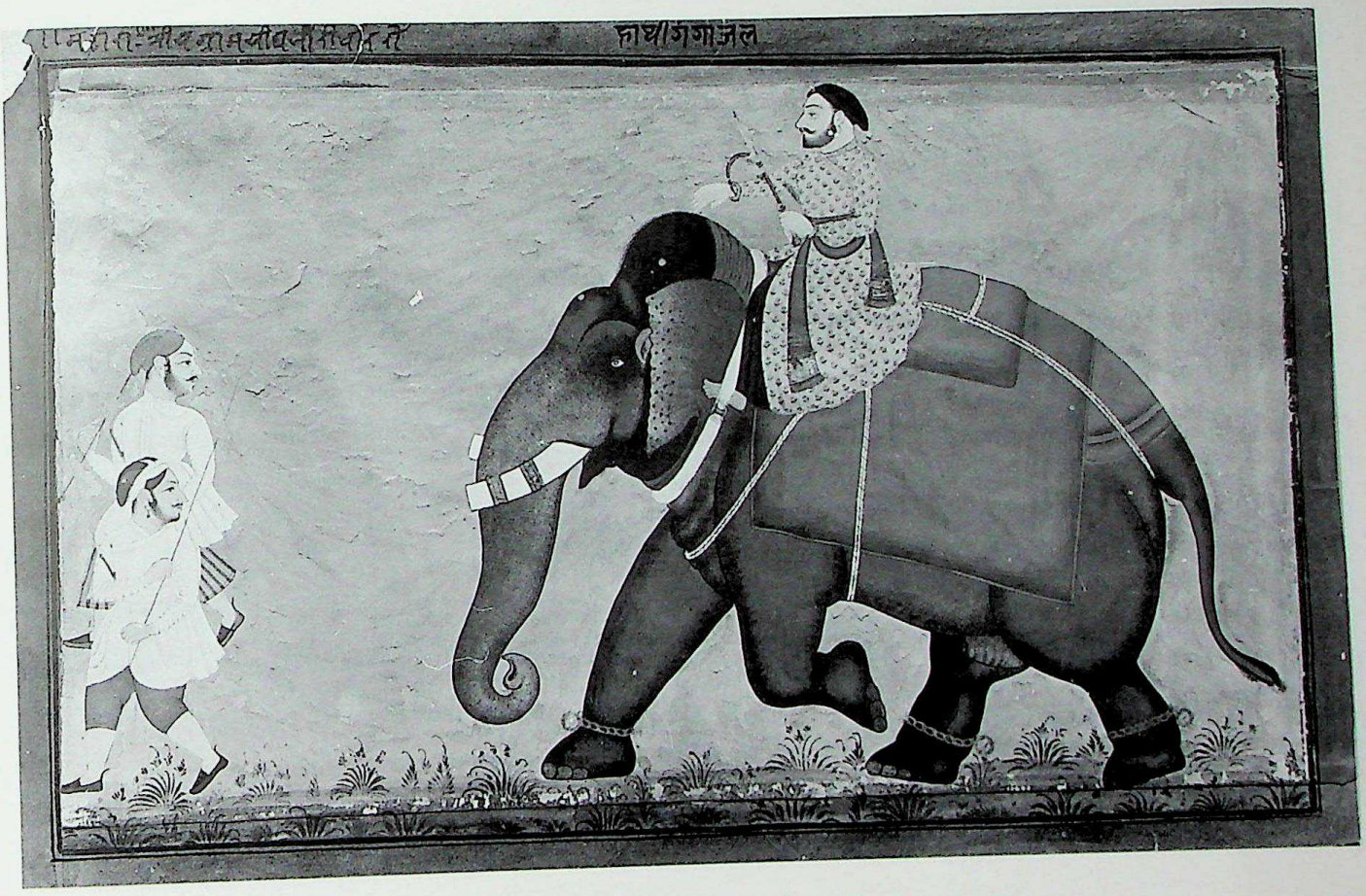

84. THE ELEPHANT OF THE MAHĀRĀṆĀ SANGRAM SINGH I (1710-1734)

Mewar, c. 1760
Gouache, *29 x 46 cm.*
Private collection, Rome

This is one the Mahārāṇā's Sangram Singh's 132 elephants, which appear to have been all reproduced in painting for the king's collection. The inscription reads: « The elephant Gangajal, the property of the Mahārāṇā Sangram Singh » (in Appendix).

The animal is preceded by two servants and driven by a nobleman holding a goad for elephants (*aṅkuśa*); a large caparison with a cushion, tied with strings, covers the back of the pachyderm.

Another elephant belonging to the same Mahārāṇā was published by A. Topsfield (1980), fig. 192; a similar miniature was published by J. Soustiel (1973), fig. 82.

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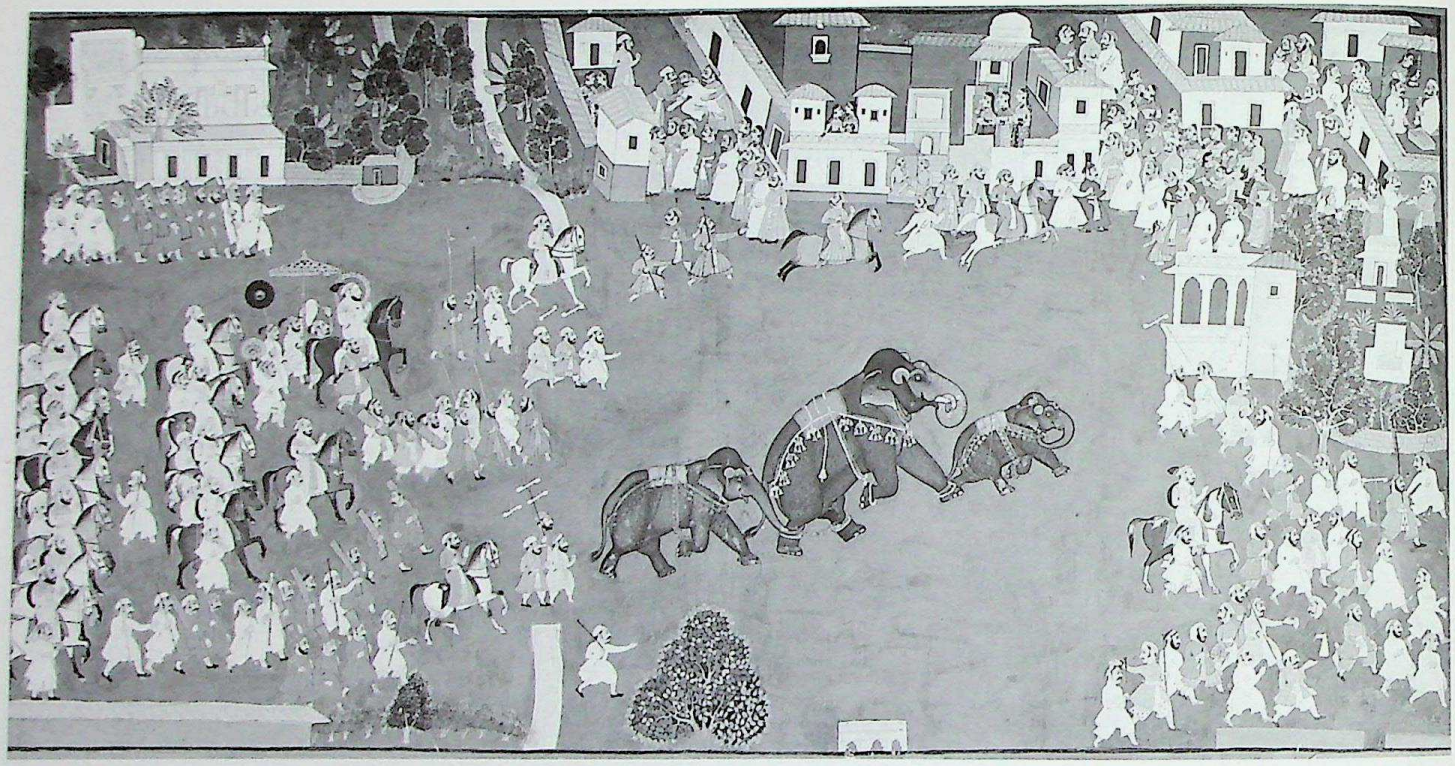

85. MAHĀRĀṆĀ SANGRAM SINGH (1710-1734) RIDING IN PROCESSION, WITH THREE ELEPHANTS

Udaipur, c. 1730
Gouache, *44 x 86.5 cm.*
Private collection

A *nāgarī* inscription on the back, written in a wavering hand and dated V.S. 1931/1874 A.D., identifies the Mahārāṇā as Sangram Singh and gives the name (illegible) of the largest elephant. Below, in tentative English script, is written the name « Muharana Sajun Sing » (Mahārāṇā Sajjan Singh, who came to the throne in 1874).

The Mahārāṇā, with gold nimbus, rides in procession accompanied by his nobles on horseback and by attendants on foot carrying regalia and weapons. They ride along a wide road, watched by the townspeople. One of the royal elephants, with chained hind-legs, is being escorted with two younger elephants, perhaps to the Chaugan, where elephant fights and other spectacles are held at Udaipur; or else they are on the return journey to the palace stables, which were situated below the public courtyard in front of the City Palace.

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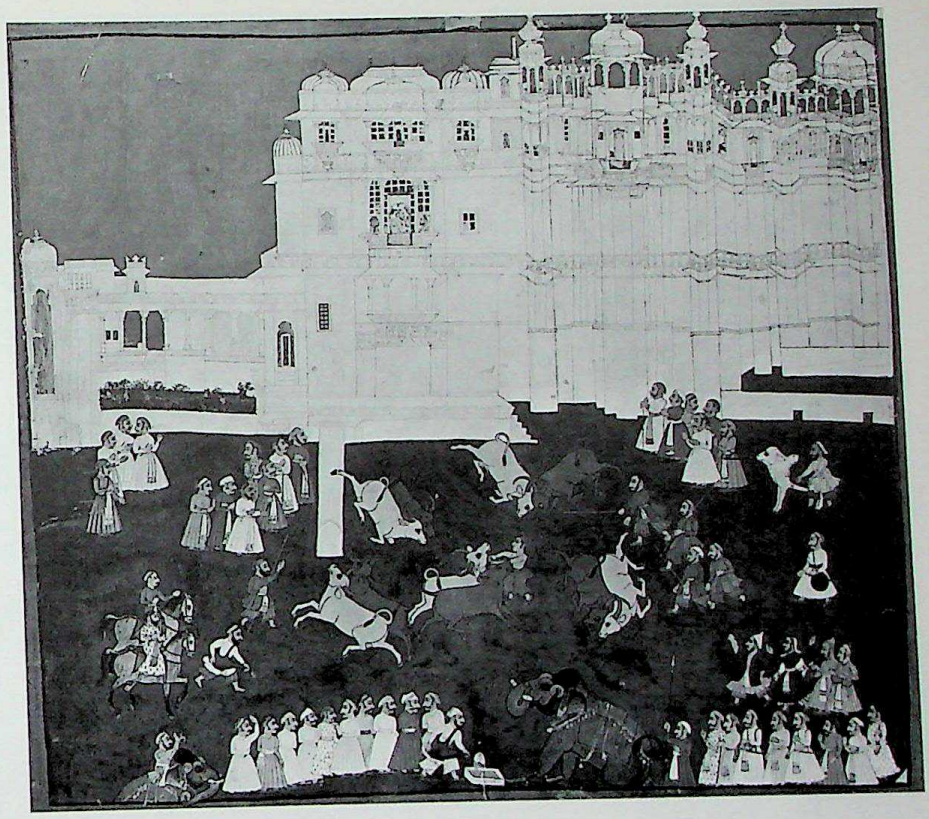
86. MAHĀRĀṆĀ SANGRAM SINGH (1710-1734) WATCHING BUFFALO FIGHTS FROM A PALACE BALCONY

Udaipur, c. 1720
Gouache, *51 x 44 cm*
Private collection



The Mahārāṇā, with gold nimbus, is seated in the public balcony of the « lower apartments » of the palace, with the nobles Rathor Kishan Das (on the right) and Kishan Singh. In the courtyard in front of the palace two buffaloes, coloured pink and grey, are seen in five successive stages of combat, watched by groups of nobles and attendants. In the foreground a water-carrier fills the drinking-trough of a tethered elephant, which sprays water from its trunk. Musicians and dancing devotees appear at the right. Behind the palace are the blue waters of the Pichola lake, with a red royal barge floating in the distance.

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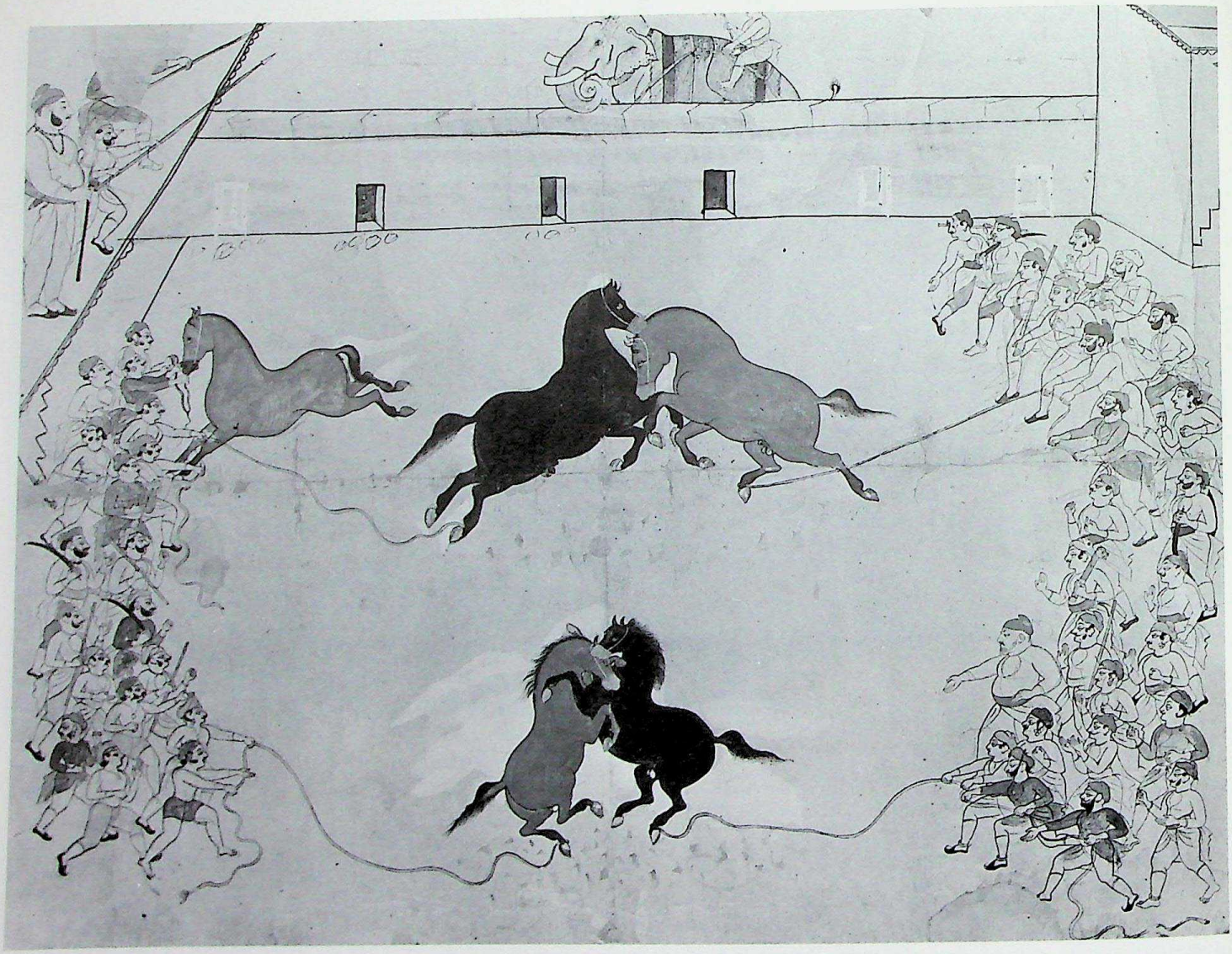

87. STALLION-FIGHT

Kotah, c. 1840
Drawing with washes of water-colour, 56 x 73.8
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 310 - 1952

W.G. Archer (1956), figs. 46-47.

Among shows, stallion-fight was highly appreciated. Two pairs of stallions face each other in the drawing; they are held by long ropes tied to one leg and their mouths are covered by a cloth muzzle to avoid dangerous bites. An attendant is muzzling another horse to enable it to take over in the fight.

On the sides of the courtyard where the scene takes place several people – common people, attendants, soldiers – are deeply involved in watching the scene, while the king and some dignitaries watch the show from the top of a balcony. An elephant and his driver are seen in the background.

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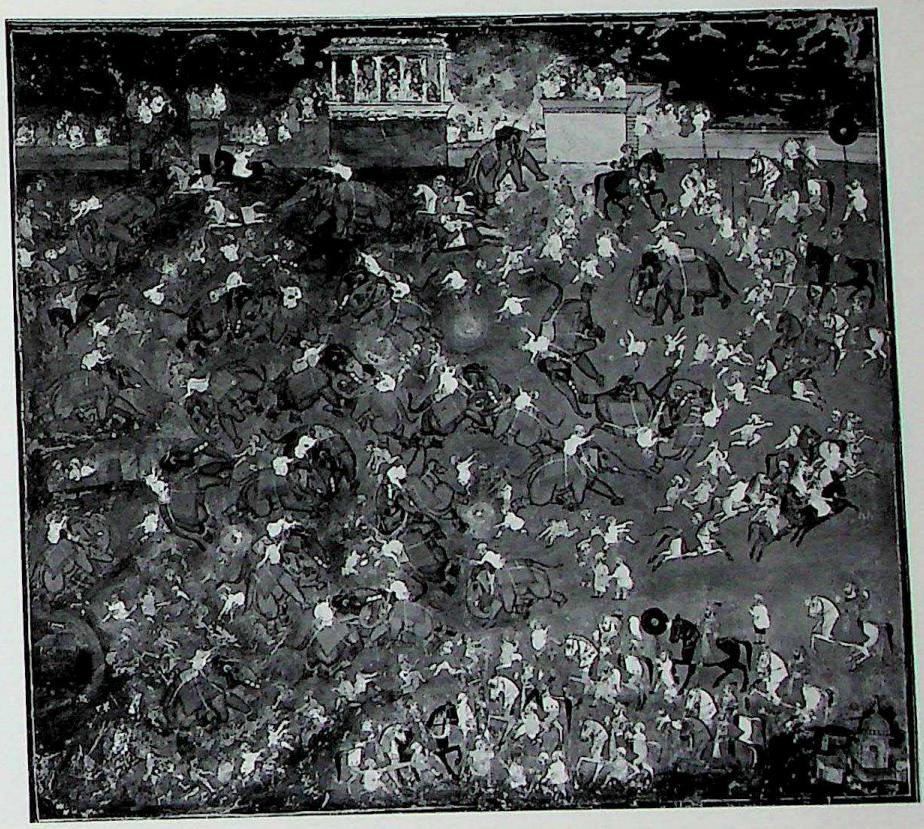

88. MAHĀRĀṆĀ JAGAT SINGH (1734-1751) RECEIVING RĀJĀ MADHO SINGH AT AN ELEPHANT FIGHT OUTSIDE THE CHAUGAN

Udaipur, 1746. By Deva
Gouache, *45.7 x 50.7 cm.*
Private collection

Mahārāṇā Jagat Singh, with blue-green and gold nimbus and riding a horse partially stained with henna, is seen twice, at the right of the picture and in the foreground, receiving his nephew Rājā Madho Singh at an elephant fight on the open ground in front of the Chaugun arena. The Mahārāṇā and nobles all wear crimson *jāmas*. In the foreground, Madho Singh, riding a partially hennaed horse, turns in the saddle towards the Mahārāṇā. They are accompanied by Nathji, Bakhat Singh, Nagaji, Jodaji, Shyam Singh, Bābā Barath Singh and Sirdar Singh.

Following the death of Marāhājā Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur in 1743, Mahārāṇā Jagat Singh suffered several expensive defeats in supporting the claim to the Jaipur throne of his nephew Madho Singh (born 1728, and aged 18 in this picture), who finally became ruler of Jaipur in 1760 (see no. 7).

Apart from wasting money on unsuccessful campaigns, Jagat Singh spent enormous sums on his builidng activities and on the pleasures of life, among which the royal elephant fights held a high place. In a letter to his chief minister in 1735 he wrote, « Gararao and Gaj Manik fought nobly and Sundar Gaj played a thousand pranks... »: Tod (1920), I, p. 492 (Tod remarks that in this letter « his elephants are mentioned more *con amore* than his sick mother or state affairs »).

In this painting by Deva two elephants are seen many times in successive phases of fierce combat, one with a red saddle-cloth and a striped head-marking, the other with a green saddle-cloth and a trident head-marking. The course of the fight is controlled by attendants with firecrackers on long poles and nobles on horseback.

For two paintings by the same artist, also showing Jagat Singh watching or pursuing elephants, see A. Topsfield (1980), nos. 125 and 127.

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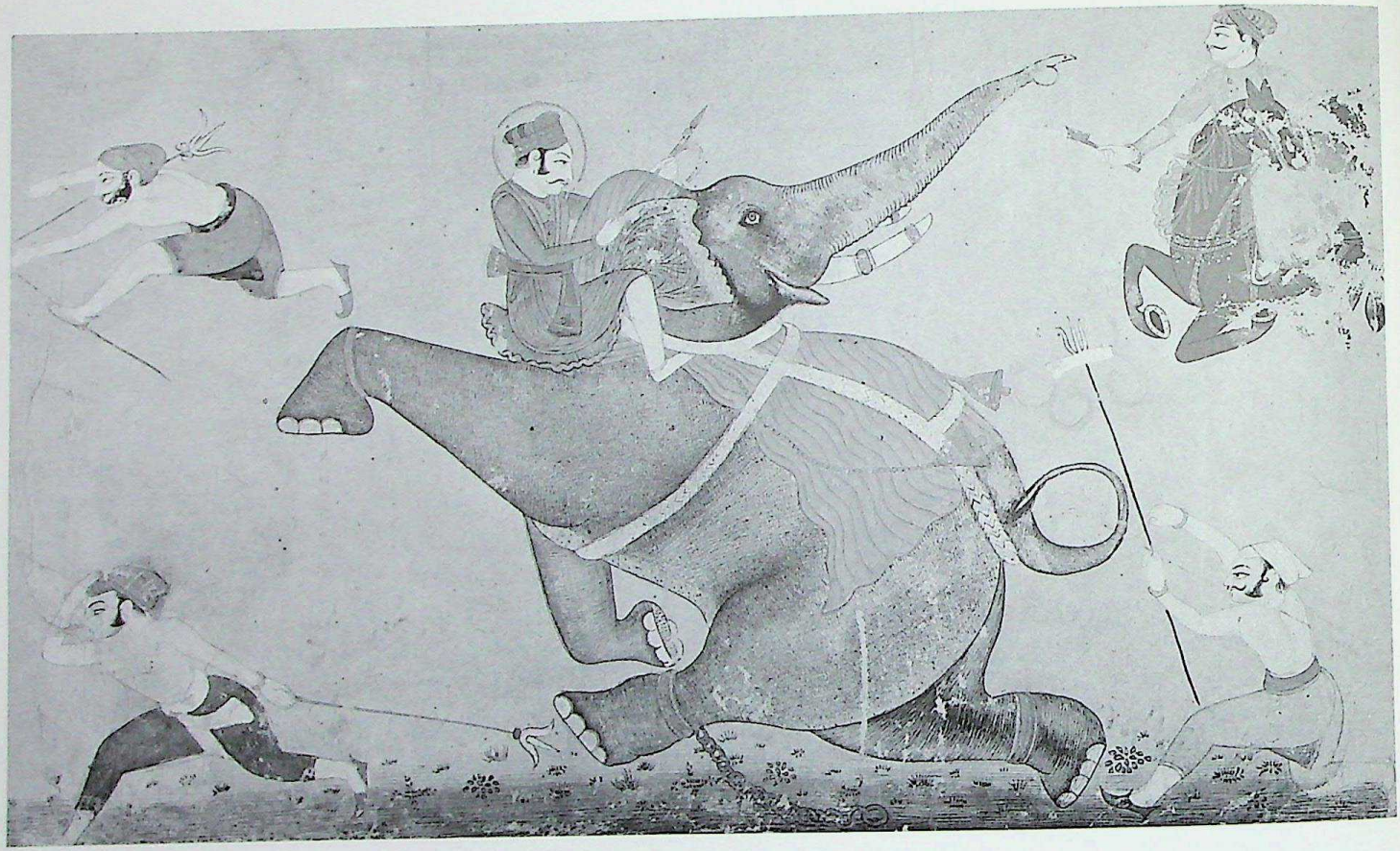

89. WILD ELEPHANT

Kotah, second half of the 18th century
Gouache, *20 x 32 cm.*
Private collection, Milan

This miniature shows an elephant made furious by wounds inflicted with spears and by fire brought near it with long poles; around it some figures flee while others draw near to it from behind; the king, recognizable from the halo around his head, may be identified as Goman Singh (1766-71) (cf. T. Hendley [1897], pl. 11, No. 11). On the back of the animal, grasping its harness, he shows his bravery and dexterity trying to resist the violent jerks of the enraged elephant.

For a description of such show see L. Rousselet, p. 103.

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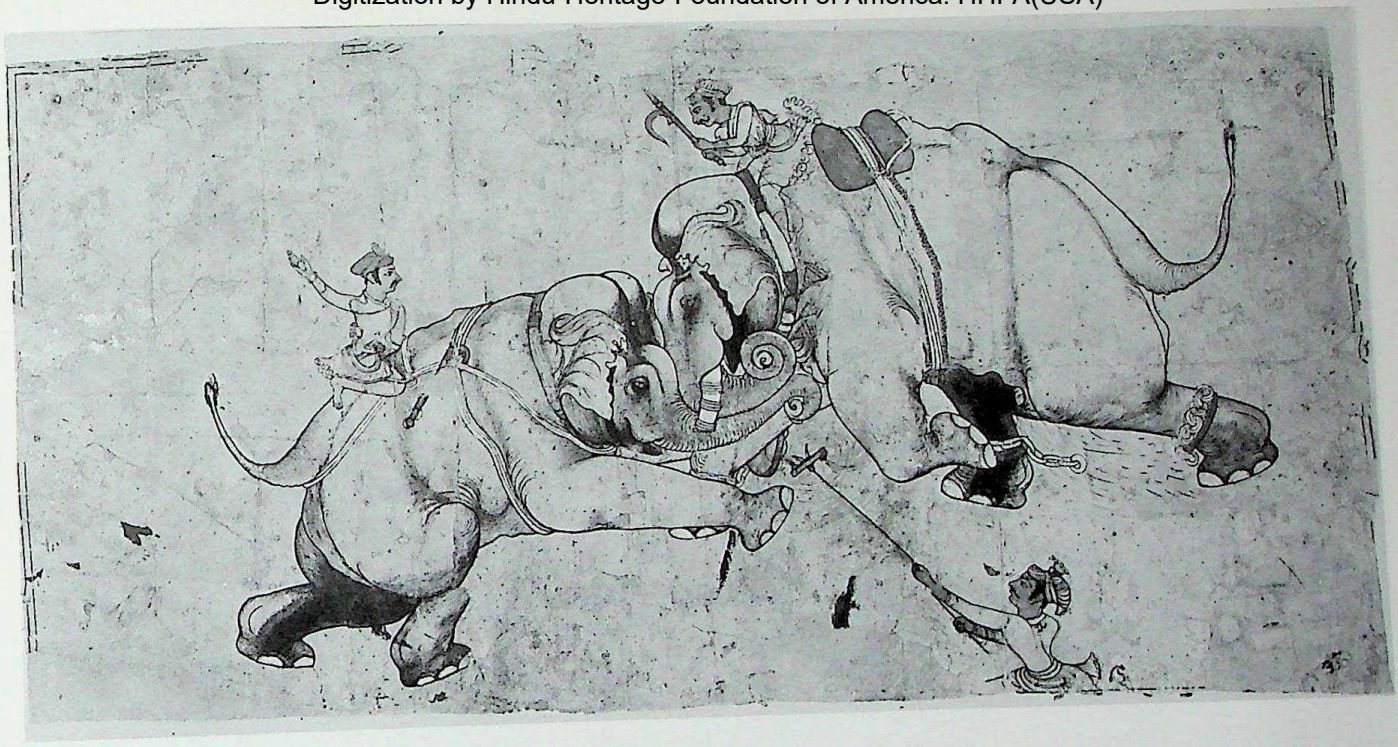

90. ELEPHANT-FIGHT

Kotah, late 17th century
Coloured drawing, 34.3 x 67.4 cm.
Private collection, London

L. Ashton (1949), No. 484;
M.C. Beach (1974), pl. LXXI, fig. 75;
S.C. Welch (1976), fig. 44, pp. 88-89;
Indian Drawing (catalogue 1983), fig. 20.

This drawing shows an extremely fine execution and at the same time a great expressive power, as the artist succeeded in conjuring up the violence during the clash of the two animals in an effective way, with steady strokes and a skilful and sophisticated shading technique; its descriptive linearism emphasizes the anatomic features of the animals, whose stoutness, however massive, vibrates with dynamic movement and strength; one should notice how, in its impetus, the elephant on the right succeeds in breaking the chains tying its hind legs.

Elephant-fight is described by the French traveller François Bernier (1891, pp. 278-279), who stayed in India from 1656 to 1668.

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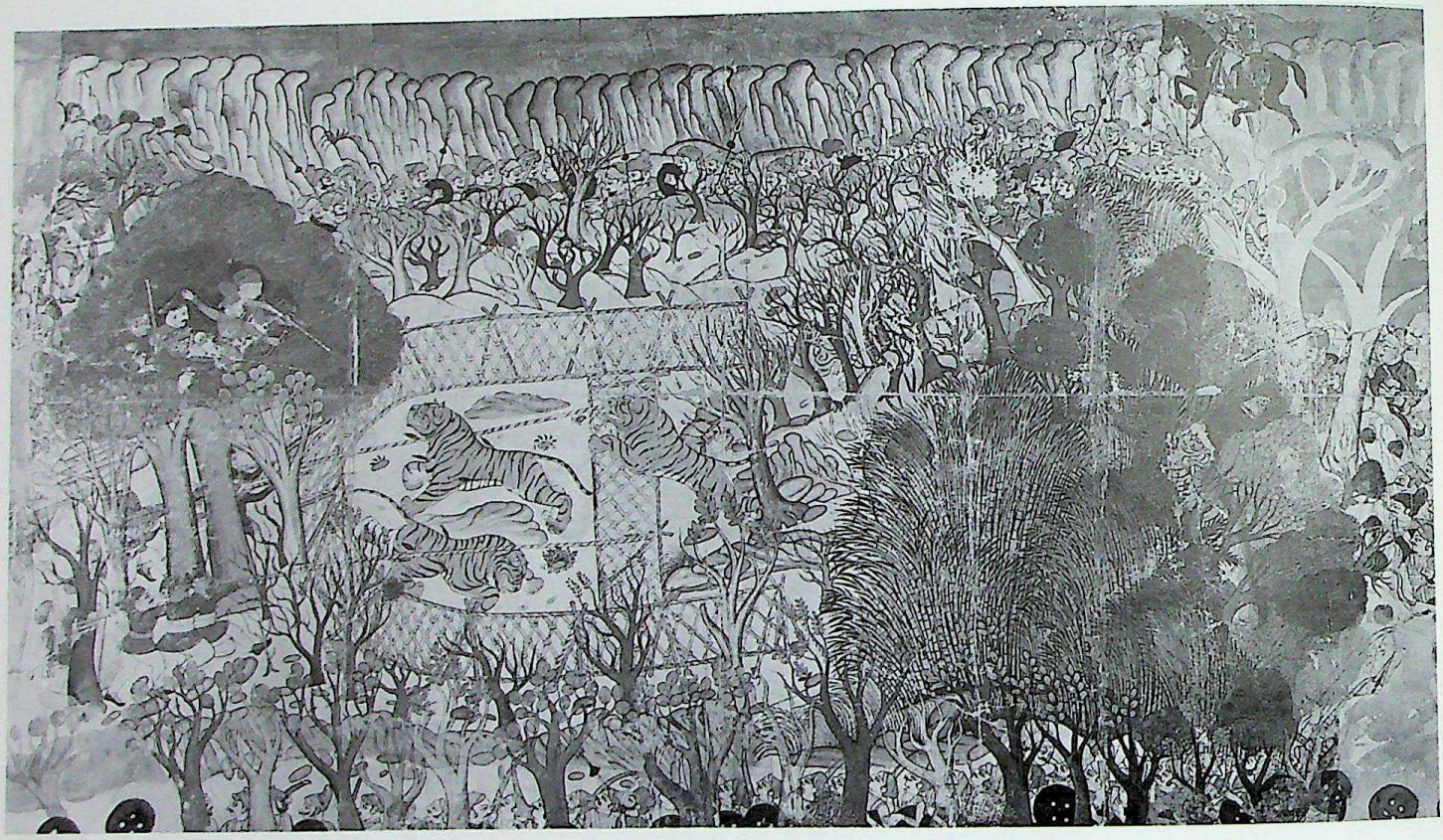

91. THE MAHĀRĀO UMED SINGH OF KOTAH (1771-1819) HUNTING TIGERS

Kotah, 1770
Gouache, *51 x 91 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS 216 - 1952

W.C. Archer (1959), fig. 37;
M.C. Beach (1974), fig. 93.

Umed Singh's reign was dominated by the despotic however capable figure of Zalim Singh, who held the office of regent to the young king for many years; the latter was subsequently relieved of the duties of government, so that he was enabled to devote himself almost exclusively to amusements, out of which the king liked hunting best.

This miniature depicts a tiger-hunting beat. The beasts are driven by beaters into a fence which is especially built with a high net supported by poles. The king and his men aim their bows and rifles at the beasts from the top of a tree. A few beaters are at the foot of the tree propping up the nets by means of long ropes. A horseman in an obviously disproportionate scale is arriving above from the right. The very uneven rocks are reminiscent of the style of Persian paintings and, by closing the horizon above, leave only a thin strip of sky. The inscription at the back reads: « The Mahārājā Śrī Umed Singh shoots from a shelter, *saṃvat* 1827 (A.D. 1770) » (in Appendix).

A drawing depicting a similar scene has been published in *Two Faces of South Asian Art* (1984), fig. No. 2, 74, dated to 1875.

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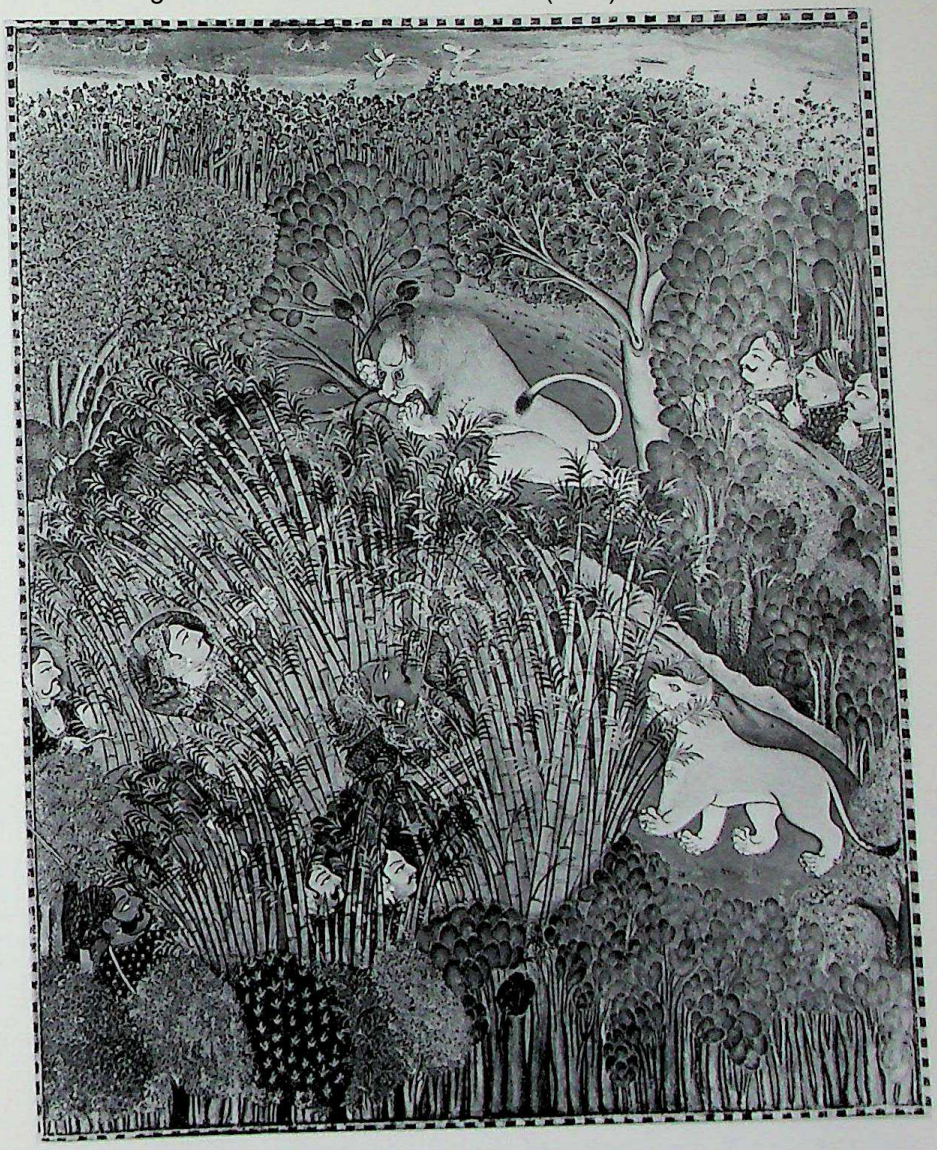
92. THE MAHĀRĀO DURJAN SAL OF KOTAH (1724-1756) HUNTING LIONS

Kotah, 1778
Gouache, *35 x 30 cm*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 562 - 1952

W. Archer (1959), fig. 41;
M.C. Beach (1974), fig. 91;
C. Allen (1984), fig. p. 13.



Col. Tod (II, p. 415) describes Durjan Sal as « a valiant prince, (who) possessed all the qualities of which the Rajpoot is enamoured; affability, generosity, and bravery. he was devoted to field-sports, especially the royal one of tiger-hunting ».

The *rāo*, recognizable from his halo, is portrayed here during a beat; hidden together with the other hunters in a reed thicket, he is shooting at a big lion ready to attack, while a lioness is arriving, too. The luxuriant vegetation allows one to see only the heads of the hunters.

The rather damaged inscription on the back reports the names of some of the people taking part in the hunt, in the *saṃvat* 1835 (A.D. 1778) (cf. Appendix).

The posture of the two lions turns out to be very similar to that in a miniature dated to about 80 years earlier (M.C. Beach [1974], fig. 60) and in a drawing of the mid-18th century (*Indian Drawing* [catalogue 1983], fig. 31), and that shows how some iconographic features do not undergo basic changes in the course of time.

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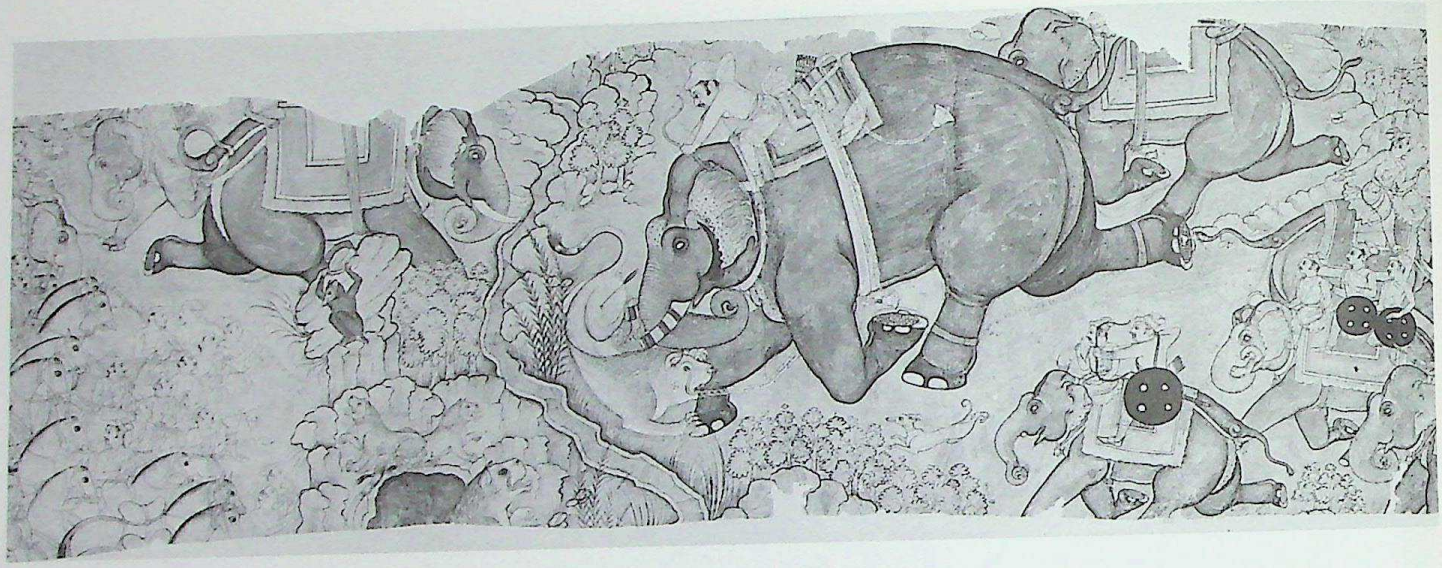

93. LION-HUNT

Rajasthan, c. 1630
Ink-drawing, 36.2 x 107.4 cm.
Private collection, London

In the Image of Man (catalogue 1982), fig. 207; *Indian Drawing* (catalogue 1983), fig. 38.

Even though only one fragment is extant of this splendid hunting scene – possibly the central section – one may, nevertheless, appreciate the skill of the unknown artist who succeeded in rendering with great effectiveness, originality and fineness, both the dramatic moment of the wounding of the lion, hurling itself at the elephant and sinking its fangs into a leg, and the chaotic and quick gait of the other elephants, and the wild fury of the three lions feeling themselves hounded and by now trapped. A group of hunting horsemen and *śikārīs* is approaching from the left to surround the lions seeking shelter on the rocks.

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94. THE MAHĀRĀṆĀ JAWAN SINGH OF UDAIPUR (1829-1838) HUNTING BOARS

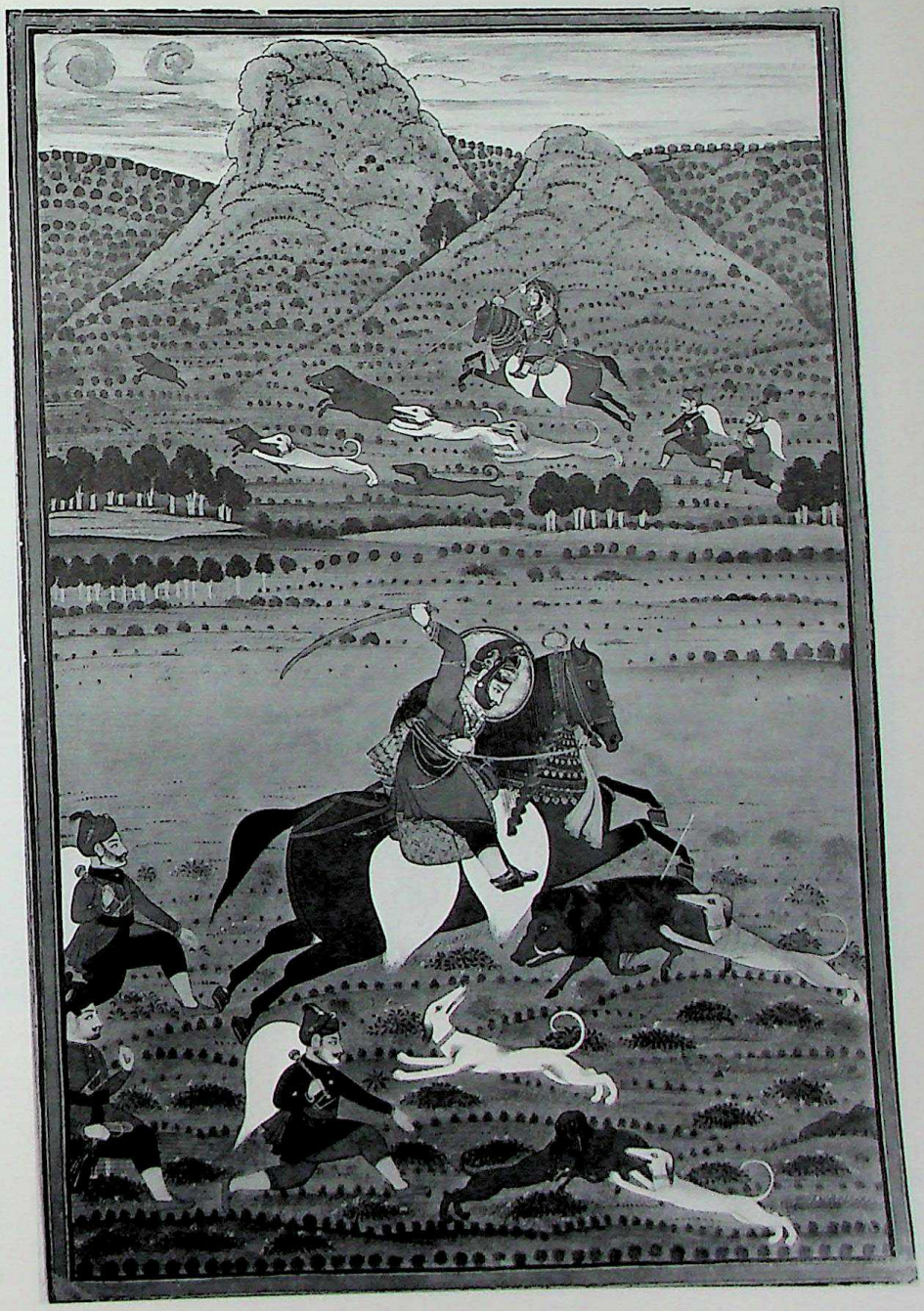
Udaipur, c. 1835
Gouache, *39.5 x 26 cm.; 41 x 27.6 cm. with border*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 557 - 1952

Indian Art (1969), fig. 51

The king is portrayed in two scenes of boar-hunt: above, at the foot of a hill, holding a long spear, he chases a big boar which has been reached by a hound, and in the foreground, while hitting with his sabre another boar already run through by an arrow and also attacked by a hound. Two attendants (*śikārīs*) rush towards a third animal hounded by two dogs, carrying ropes to tie it with. The hunt takes place in a hilly landscape, with few trees and sparse bushes, just as may be seen still today in winter in the neighbourhood of Udaipur, during the drought.

The scene vibrates with the movement given by the dynamic gallop of the two horses, the elongated shape of rushing hounds and the swift gait of the attendants. The harness of the horse is refined and graceful, and two big white decorative caparisons appear from underneath its saddle (cf. fig. 33).

The band worn by the king under the chin, sometimes appearing in official portraits, too, shows the care they put in curling their beard and moustache, which were regarded as a symbol of virility. Cf. A. Topsfield (1980), pl. 240-243; T.H. Hendley (1897), pl. 15, No. 19; for the identification of the king cf. A. Topsfield (1980), Nos. 216-234, *passim*.



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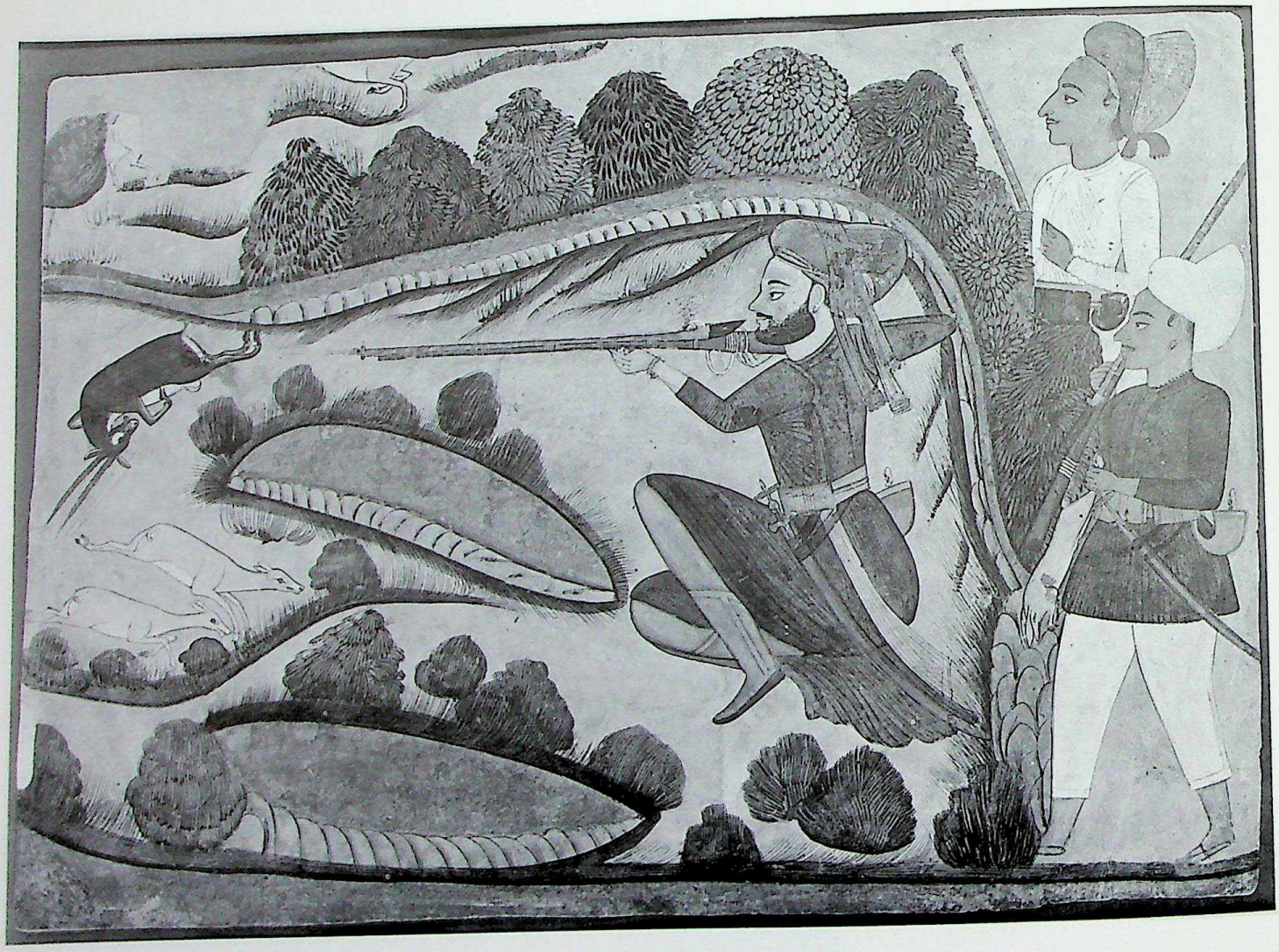

95. ANTELOPE-HUNT

Jaisalmer or Marwar, late 18th century
Gouache, *20.3 x 28.5 cm.*
Private collection, London

A nobleman sitting behind a rock aims his rifle at an antelope falling to the ground; behind him two attendants are ready to replace the unloaded rifle with others already loaded. The scene takes place in a landscape drawn in a very stylized and fanciful way; also the disproportion of figures emphasizes its spatial suggestion.

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96. CAPTURE OF A TIGER

Devgarh, early 19th century
Gouache, *26.7 x 38 cm.*
Private collection, London

Indian Paintings (catalogue 1975), fig. 58

A tiger attracted by a buffalo placed as a bait, falls into a trap made up of a rope hanging from a long pole lifting the animal by its paw. Beyond a stream a hunter approaches brandishing a sabre and holding a shield, ready to hit the animal under the eyes of the main figure, of a disproportionate size, and of his retinue.

The scene is treated with fresh naïvety; « naïf » features and increased stylization appear in the landscape as well as in the figures.

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97. BOAR-HUNT

Nagaur, second half of the 18th century
Gouache, *24 x 24 cm.*
Private collection, Rome

Colnaghi (catalogue 1978), p. 68, No. 76.

Two Rajput princes, wearing bulky turbans characteristic of Marwar, take part in a boar-hunt together with their attendants, all identified by an inscription on the back of the miniature: the prince on the left, above, is the Kuṃvār Rugh Nath Singh ji, riding a horse with a long mane combed and adorned; the Kuṃvār Sarup Singh ji is on the right; the attendants are the *sir'dār* Bhati Singh ji, Ranavat Kan ji and Ragenhir Ram ji on the left, and Dughrot Jor ji and Makrana Thiyo on the right.

The hunters, holding long spears and bayonets, all converge galloping on two boars pursued by greyhounds which are about to snap at them; other animals, a rabbit and some antelopes, also flee, pursued by hounds.

Though partially damaged on the sides, this miniature reproduces very effectively the swift movement of hunters and animals, and the vibrant leap of the dogs, with their extremely elongated bodies.

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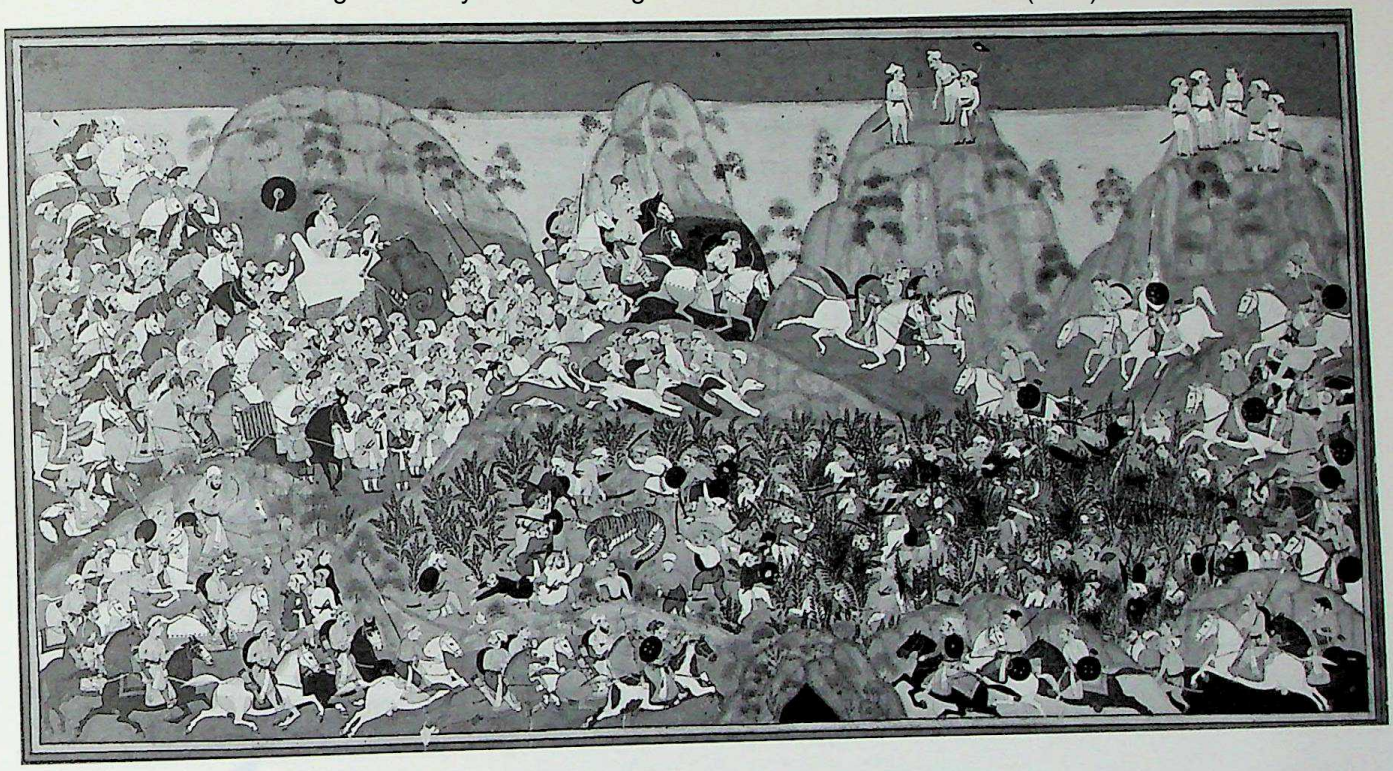

98. MAHĀRĀṆĀ AMAR SINGH (1698-1710) ON A TIGER HUNT

Udaipur, c. 1705
Gouache, *34.7 x 67.8 cm.*
Private collection

A. Topsfield (1982), fig. 2

The Mahārāṇā, in a red turban and transparent white *jāma* over a red *pāyjāmā*, sits holding a musket in the white cloth-draped howdah of his elephant. He is accompanied by numerous nobles on horseback, attendants and *śikārī* (huntsmen), some with dogs, on a tiger hunt at Dhikali (?) Magra. In the bushy thicket in the centre, a tiger is shown in five successive poses from right to left: hiding, then struggling with its attackers and finally being slain. Other hunters (perhaps of the Bhil tribe) stand on the hills behind.

This very detailed scene is one of the most ambitious paintings made for Mahārāṇā Amar Singh. Its conventional treatment of groups of figures and of landscape derives from the 17th century tradition of manuscript illustration at Udaipur.

The favourite hunting ground of the Mahārāṇās of Mewar was at Nahar Magra (« Tiger Hill »), about 20 kilometers east of Udaipur. Mahārāṇā Sangram Singh (1710-34) built a palace and shooting-boxes there, which were visited during the winter months by almost all the Mahārāṇās down to the present century: D.N. Purohit (1938), p. 46.

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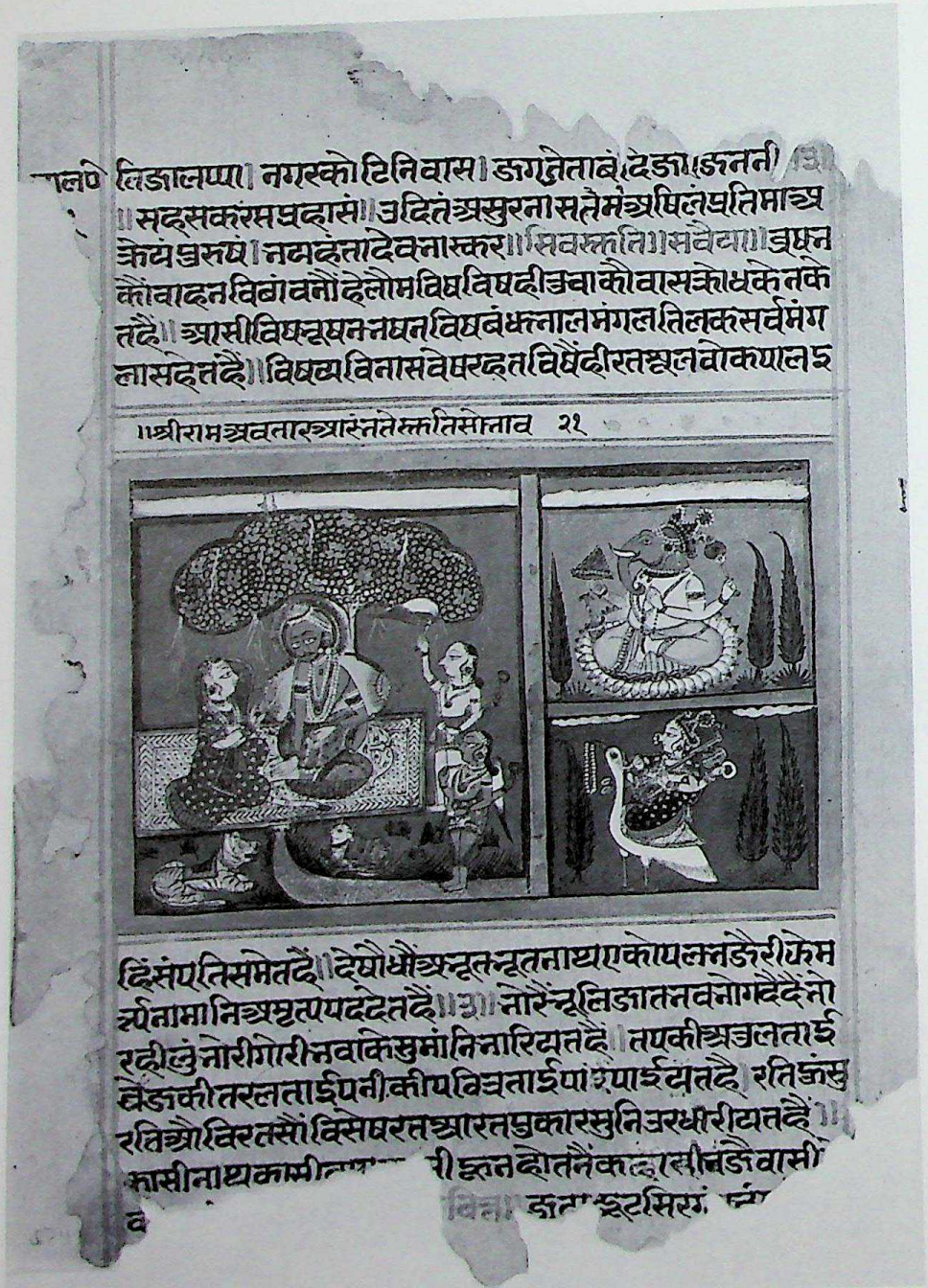

99. ILLUMINATED PAGE

Jodhpur, 18th century
Gouache, *32.5 x 24 cm.*
Rietberg Museum, Zürich, 1152

Rajput kings, like Moghul emperors, loved collecting illuminated books and manuscripts and miniatures on various subjects, which they collected in albums and often constituted welcome gifts for their guest and their wives.

The illuminated page shown here is part of a manuscript of religious subject whose title is unknown. It depicts, on the left, the god Śiva as an ascetic, sitting under a tree on a tiger skin; his spouse Durgā, identifiable from the presence of her mount, the tiger, is turning to him; at the god's feet there is the bull Nandī sacred to him. The top right square depicts Ganeśa, the god of fortune and prosperity, with his characteristic elephant face, and the bottom right square shows Sarasvatī, Brahmā's spouse, the goddess of music and poetry, of arts and sciences, riding a swan.

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100. BĀRAH'MĀSĀ, MONTH OF KĀRTIK

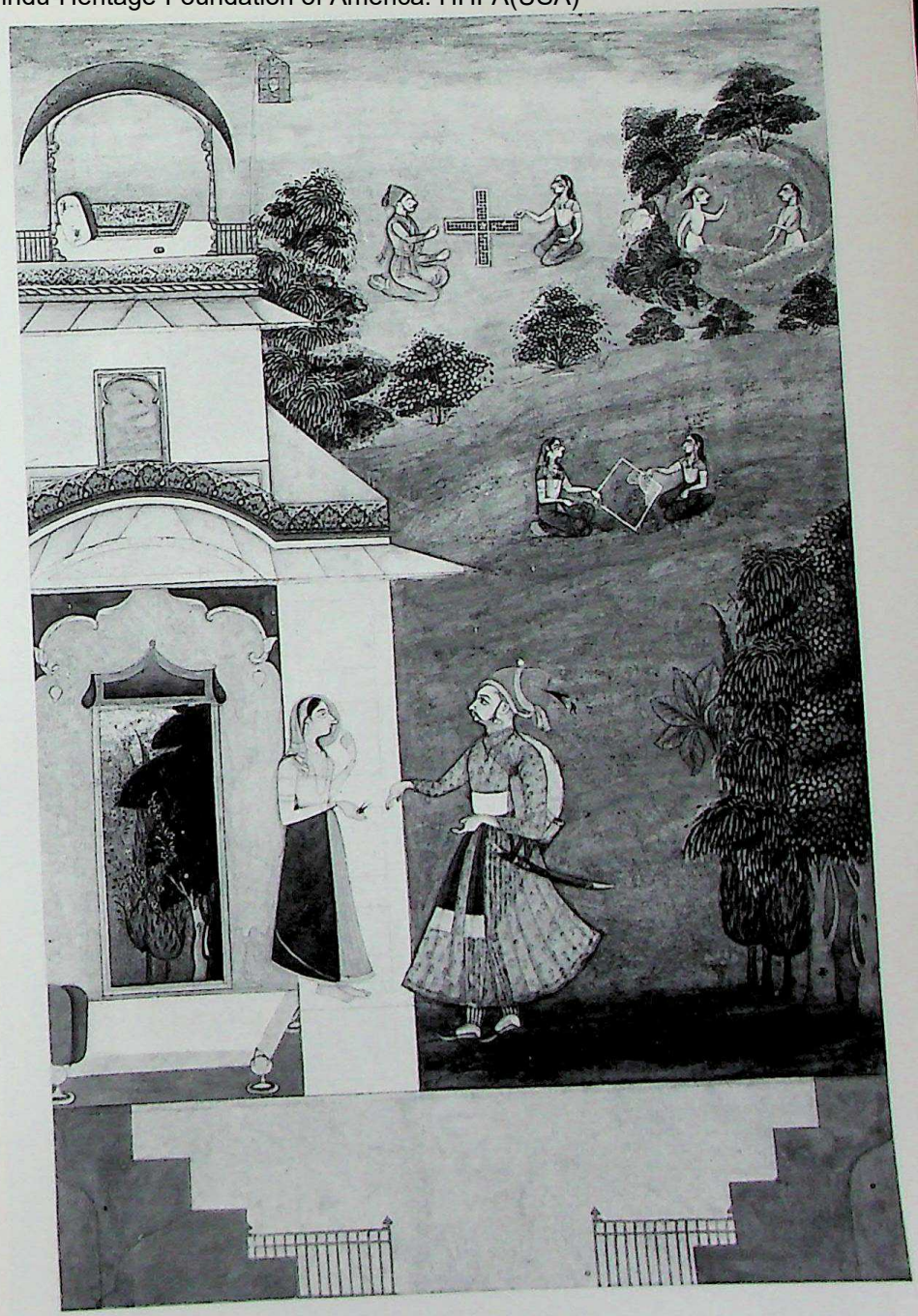
Bikaner, c. 1725. By Murad
Gouache, *25.8 x 17 cm.; 28 x 19 cm. with border*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
IS 32 - 1980

Indian Painting (1978), p. 56, fig. 63

A nobleman wearing a saffron-yellow *jāmā* decorated with flowers, a long *paṭ'kā* with a short sabre at his side and a big orange turban on his head, is coming into a young woman's bedroom, and she is meeting him on the threshold, offering him some betels. Through the vertical section of the house one can see the low bed (*cār'pāī*) with cushions and a nicely decorated window, where the garden trees show. Notice the strange perspective of the threshold, seen as 'flat', and seeming to continue the wing of the door.

In the country two women, sitting on the meadow, make a *rāṅgolī*, that is a propitious decoration, often geometrical, made of coloured powders, or coloured rice grains or petals, which nowadays is still made in India on festivities or important events. On the right top two men are bathing in a little lake, while two persons are playing *cōpaṛ* or *pacīsī* (that is a very popular game in India, probably of local origin, often also represented in miniatures). *Cōpaṛ* is a game for two or four players, consisting of a cross-shaped board, usually made of embroidered cloth, and with sixteen ivory or bone cones, their movements being determined by six shells thrown in the air. Cf. R.C. Bell (1979), pp. 110-111; H.J.R. Murray (1952); *Petals...* (1984), No. 279; G.N. Sharma (1968), p. 132.

An inscription on the back (cf. Appendix) – more recent than another one, very damaged, where one can read « month of Kārtik » – ascribes the miniature to the painter Murad; that can be confirmed by comparing the painting with a very similar one by the same author published in S.C. Welch and M.C. Beach (1965), No. 30. The miniature is intended to evoke the beauty of the months October-November and the pleasant activities one may attend to – the preparation of the festival of Divālī being one – in order to make one's beloved delay his departure and stay longer by his woman.



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101. COURTESAN WAITING FOR HER LOVER
(from the *Rasamañjarī* by Bhanu Datta, 16th century)

Mewar, c. 1620-30
Gouache, *24 x 18 cm.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS 99 - 1965

The *Rasamañjarı* by Bhanu Datta is a 16th century work of poetics dealing with the different feelings of love experienced by heroes (*nāyaka*) and heroines (*nāyikā*).

A courtesan, sitting in front of her home, is waiting for her lover, as reported in the stanza written in Sanskrit, in *mālinī* metre, on a light background on top (cf. Appendix): « ' After knowing love inside me, experienced through separation, (my) lover will come here again, giving me some money '. With these thoughts in her mind, after putting a good quantity of chillies in her eyes, the courtesan sitting on the threshold makes her tears flow ». The inscription on dark ground says: « A woman, whose husband is distant, is sorrow-stricken, her lover having gone to another home ». The other two inscriptions report that she is « a courtesan, whose lover is distant ». The latter comes riding his horse, preceded by a servant. Inside the house one can see a bed with a high cushion, a lamp, some bottles and jugs and a bowl with some food inside, prepared to give refreshment to the lover.

This is the earliest miniature shown here. The formal simplification and the essentiality of its components are evident; the total lack of perspectives and of shaded tones and the roughness of design – these features are characteristic of early Rajasthani miniature painting – do not diminish the ingenuous freshness of the story which is made vibrant with bright colours, spread in large backgrounds without transparence effects.

Other miniatures of the same series are in the National Museum in New Delhi and in a private collection, always in India: cf. M. Chandra (1957), pl. I; W.G. Archer (1957) pp. 28-29, Nos. 22, 25; P.S. Rawson (1961), p. 135; S. Lee (1961), p. 25, fig. 14.

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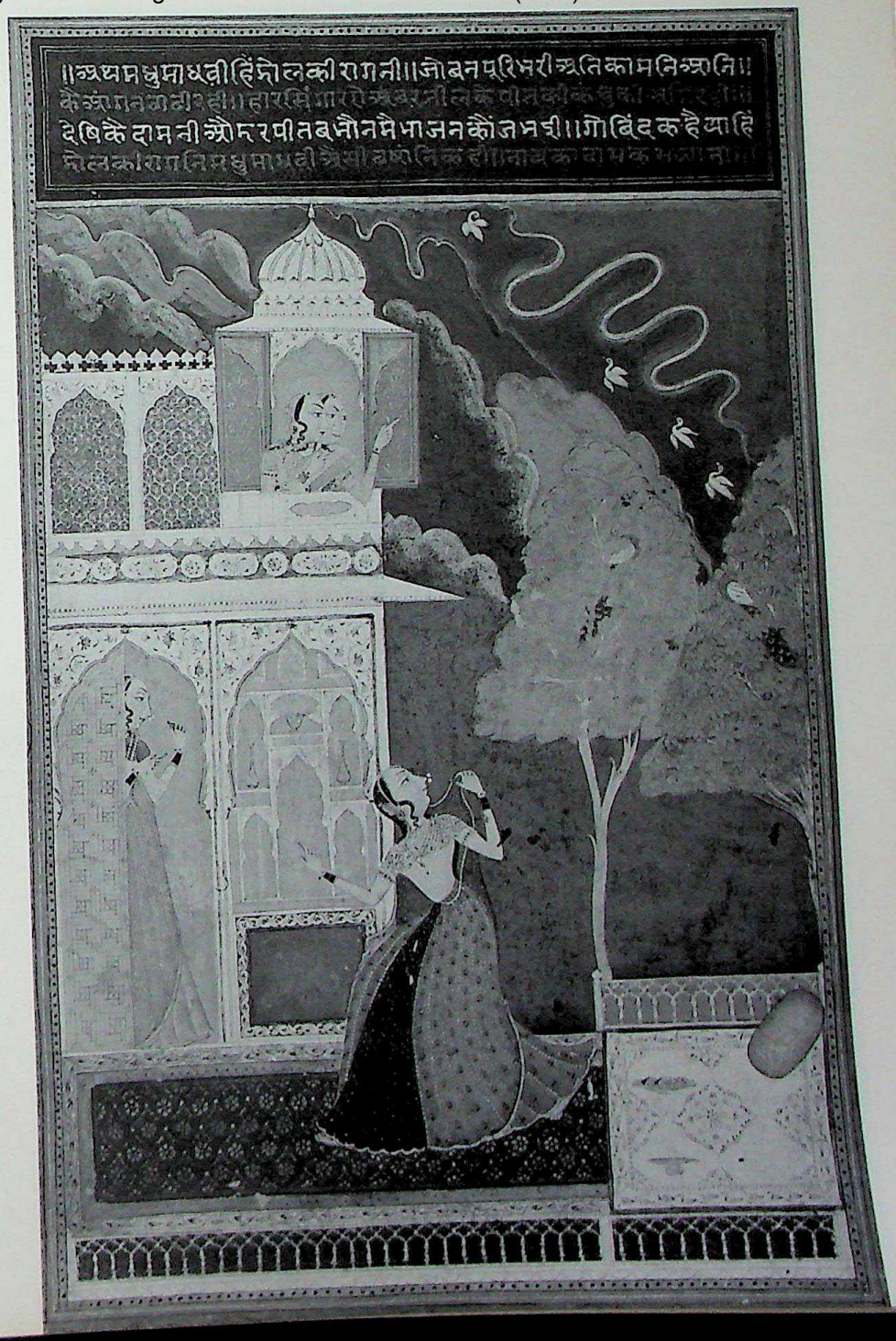
102. MADHUMĀDAVĪ RĀGIṆĪ

Malpura (Jaipur), 1756
Gouache, *23.5 x 17 cm.*
Rietberg Museum, Zürich, 868

H. Brinker and E. Fischer (1980), pp. 62-63, fig. 21;
K. Ebeling (1973), fig. C 22, p. 212.



The young heroine is caught in a sudden storm and flees home frightened, leaving what she prepared for the rendezvous in the rain: a carpet, a cushion, a tray for betels, another tray.

Although her istinctive fear has compelled her to run home, she looks back still doubtful, half way, only to see the sky streaked with lightnings. Peacocks have already taken shelter on trees, while cranes rise flying to the sky; one of them, similar to the heroine in her attitude, looks back to watch its companions. Three women, two from an open window and one from the door, are urging the young girl to go inside.

The miniature, as many representations of *Rāgamālās*, rather than telling an episode, wants to express a feeling and a mood, which here appear to be the uncertainty and fear of the young girl waiting for her lover who – as often happens in these subjects – will deceive and leave her sad and alone; here the meeting is made difficult because of natural adversities, and the swift movement of the woman suggests her sorrow and disappointment at the sudden change in weather, which will not make it easy for her lover to come.

Madhumādhavī means « jasmine honey » and in the miniature it is associated with two aspects of the female character: frailty in solitude, revealed by the fear for the sudden lightning, and at the same time the ability to resist and fight against the same fear in order to fulfil the wish of union with the lover.

The miniature belongs to a series of *Rāgamālās* by the painter Jai Kishna, dating to 1756.

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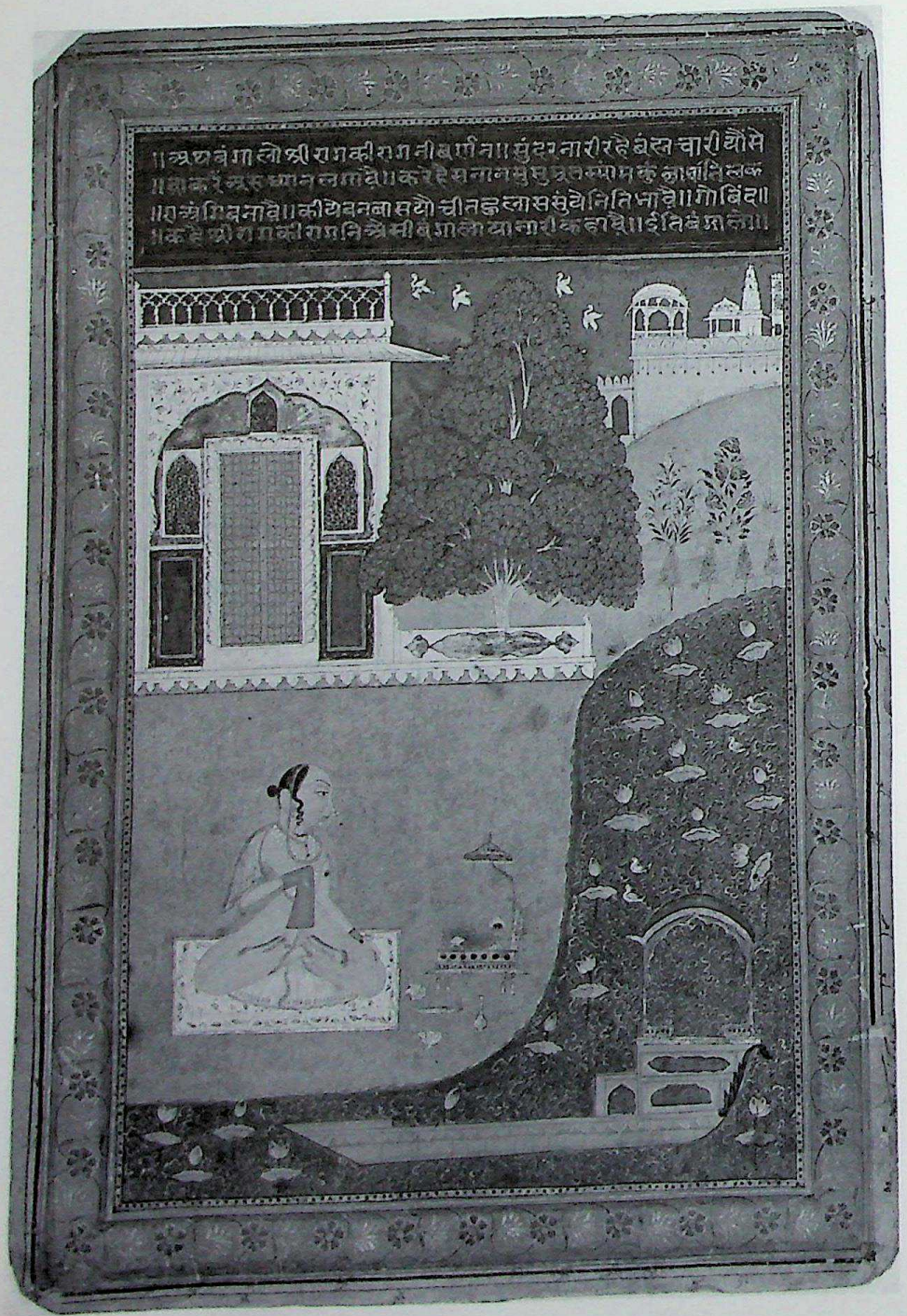

103. BAṄGĀLA RĀGIṆĪ

Malpura (Jaipur), 1756
Gouache, *24 x 17.5 cm.*
Rietberg Museum, 852

A young ascetic is sitting with crossed legs on a little carpet near a river where lotus flowers appear and some little geese float; she looks with a sad expression at an elegant empty boat moored in the river. She is absorbed in prayer and she is telling the beads, hidden in their pouch (*gomukh*). A little portable altar in beside her.

A house with an adorned doorway and an open-work balustrade is on the back; in the background there is a beautiful palace with pavilions and little domes and the tower of a temple.

The scene expresses her sorrow for being forsaken by her lover, which compelled the woman to seek comfort in ascetic life; his absence is emphasized by the empty boat, and the poetic verses appearing in the inscription at the top describe the *rāgiṇī*, reported in the beginning, as follows: « *atha baṃgālo śrī rāgakī raganı varṇana* ». *Baṅgāla* means « she who comes from Bengal ».

The miniature is attributed to the painter Jai Kishna; cf. the preceding miniature, No. 102, and K. Ebeling (1973), pp. 148, 212-214.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

104. VASANTA RĀGIṆĪ

Bundi, 18th century
Gouache, *21.8 x 13 cm*
Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz
Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin,
MIK I 5521

A. Werke (1971), No. 208, fig. 35;
E. and R.L. Waldschmidt (1975), II, pp. 57-58, fig. 2.

Kṛṣṇa, in a short tunic, tight trousers and a headgear bedecked with jewels and plumes, is dancing following the music played by three young sheperdesses (*gopī*) with a double-headed drum (*mṛdaṅga*), a flute (*muralī*) and cymbals. The god holds an elegant damascened vase containing mango sprouts and a *tā'ūs vīṇā*, a stringed instrument made usually with two pumpkins (here only one is depicted) and a bird-shaped carved neck; he is adorned with several jewels and with a long garland coming down to his feet. It is springtime, trees and bushes are in flower, birds play in the water and on the trees, where garlands of flowers are hung; in the sky two cranes fly. A similar compositive scheme is found in a miniature published in E. and R.L. Waldschmidt (1975), II, fig. 3 (Bundi, first half of the 17th century), in R. Skelton (1960), fig. 16 (Bundi, 19th century), and in M.C. Beach (1974), fig. 123 (Raghugarh, c. 1790); the latter ones appear to be of a lesser artistic interest.

Vasanta Rāgiṇī – the name of this *rāgiṇī* is reported in the inscription (see Appendix) – is interpreted in spring, in the morning; it wants to express the sentiment of joy pervading every being at the beginning of spring, skilfully expressed in this miniature by the brightness of colours, by the rhythm of figures and by the decorative luxuriance of vegetation.

The poet Jayadeva (12th century) wrote: « I know where Kṛṣṇa tarries in these early days of Spring, / When every wind from warm Malay brings fragrance on its wing... / He is dancing with the dancers to a laughter moving tone, / In the soft awakening Spring-time, when 'tis hard to live alone ». See E. and R.L. Waldschmidt (1975), p. 35.

Digitization by Hindu-Heritage-Foundation of America. HHFA(USA)

105. ĀSĀVARI RĀGIṆĪ

Antarda, mid-18th century
Gouache, *21.6 x 18.4 cm.;*
39.5 x 28.6 cm. with border
Rietberg Museum, Zürich, 1071

R. Skelton (1960), p. 49, fig. 26

A young woman is sitting on a carpet under a tree, near a little temple; another temple of the same shape, but bigger, is on the hill on the horizon, surrounded by trees. An ascetic with a snake-charming flute is sitting facing the woman and several reptiles crawl, curl themselves up or climb on to the tree; a little goat is eating one of them while another is winding round the woman's arm.

The atmosphere shows the sad feeling of the young woman, who, distressed by her beloved's absence, seeks refuge in a solitary place – indeed the ascetic suggests loneliness – to find comfort among animals, often taken as confidants to soothe the pains of love, and protection near the temple of a god.

In this *rāgiṇī* the maid, belonging to the Savara tribe, famous for its snake-charming customs – usually wears a gown of peacock feathers and has a dark complexion. See E. and R.L. Waldschimdt (1975), pp. 282-290. In music this *rāga* is interpreted in winter at midday.

On Antarda see K. Khandalavala (1971) pp. 58-63. Antarda is a little *ṭhikānā* in Bundi where a painting school seems to have been founded in the second half of the 18th century. Its artistic production shows more affinity with the Jaipur style than with the Bundi one; Jaipur artists, called in by local squires, have probably left their traces in the development of this school.

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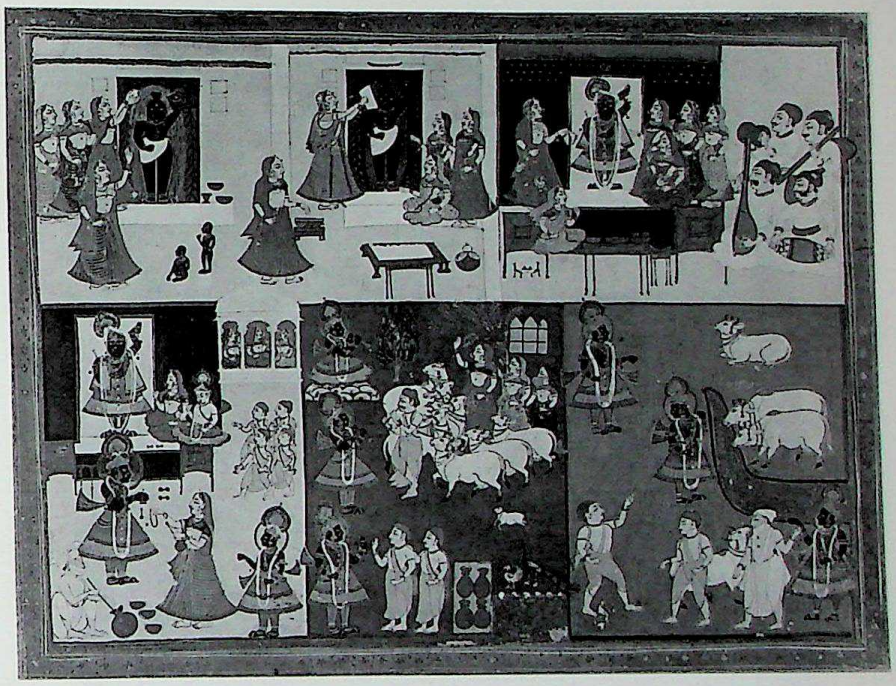
106. ŚRĪ NATJĪ AND SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF KṚṢṆA

Nathdvara (Udaipur), 19th century
Gouache, *25 x 37 cm.*
Rietberg Museum, Zürich, 1137



The miniature shows two registers, each of them divided in three squares. The three scenes of the top and the one at the bottom left corner depict the image of Śrī Nathjī, Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the cell of the temple of Nathdvara (see fig. 43), while he is venerated by women performing a *pūjā*, namely ritual offerings and cerimonies. The god is shown dressed in different ways: in a plain *dhotī* and in a large gown with a scarf hanging down on his shoulders, with and without the *pich'vāī*, the decorative cloth that is on the background of the statue; all these elements point to different times of the day (the god changes his clothes six times a day) and of the year, namely the different festivals on which various rites and ceremonies take place. (See R. Skelton [1983]; K.T. Talwar-Krishna [1979]). The bottom left square depicts the image of Kṛṣṇa again while taking the offering of a necklace from a woman; at his feet there sits a figure possibly making butter in a big jar.

In the centre numerous scenes from the life of the young shepherd god are represented: at the top, on the left, he is sitting on Mount Govardhana, which one day he lifted to protect his followers from the rains caused by the fury of the god Indra; below, he entertains the shepherds and their flock and finally he is paid homage by two men. Also the last scenes show Kṛṣṇa together with the shepherds and cows watering in the river Jamuna.

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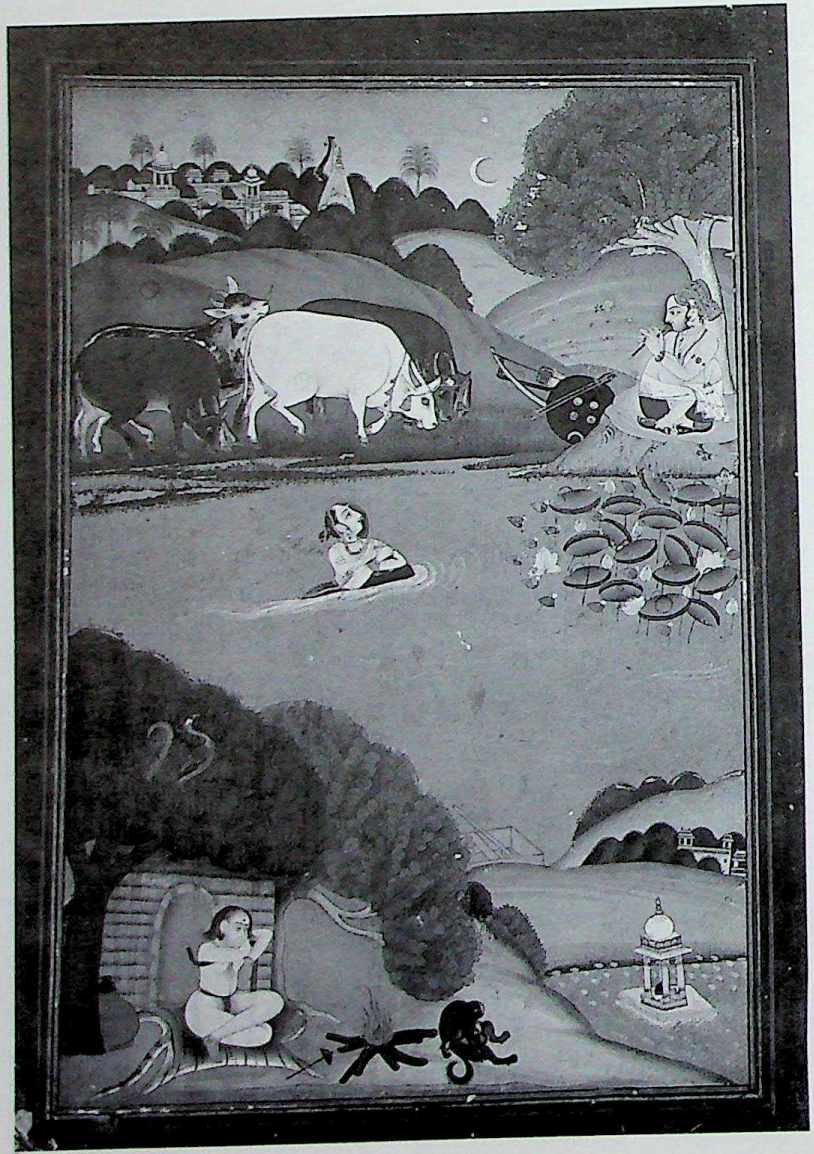

107. SOHNĪ AND MAHĪNVĀL

Kotah or Bundi, c. 1810
Gouache, *29 x 20.5 cm.*
Rietberg Museum, Zürich, 820

H. Brinker and E. Fischer (1980), pp. 60-61, fig. 20

The miniature refers to a story originated in Punjab, about the love of a Butkara merchant (or a Moghul prince) for the daughter of a Gujarat potter. In order to be near his beloved, the young man decides to work as buffalo herdsman (*mahiṣ'vālā*) taking his animals to water along the river near his beloved's village. Also Sohnī (the wonderful) falls in love with the stranger and, against her community laws, one night she gets to him crossing the river with the help of a jar. But she is found out by her sister-in-law who replaces the jar with an unbaked clay vessel so that the beautiful Sohnī will miserably drown in the water.

Such story is still well-known today and it is also the theme of a very popular song.

The miniature depicts the girl crossing the river, leaning her arms on the jar; her body is hidden by the water and a fine golden bordered veil frames her face; she turns her eyes towards the bank where the young man plays his flute sitting on a smooth rock. His gold brocade turban and his embroidered shoes show his noble origin; his legs are bent and tied together with a scarf; beside him a bow, arrows and a shield lie on the meadow; four cows quietly graze turning their muzzles to him. Far away there are houses and palaces with elegant little domes and a temple with a high tower. A dark mass of trees and of aerial and light palms stands out against the sky. Lotus flowers with their beautiful fan-shaped leaves bloom on the river. In the foreground a young ascetic is sitting on a tiger skin in front of his hut hidden in the trees. He holds on to a stick, commonly used by *yogins* for meditation, and looks at a shrine where one can notice a little *liṅgam* and the image of Nandī (the bull sacred to the god); next to a fire a dog is licking itself; a little boat is moored by the river bank. The saint and the boat are to show the possibility of another way to reach peace and self-fulfilment.

In the course of time the image of the buffalo herdsman took over features very similar to Kṛṣṇa's, such as the flute and the cows, which substituted the buffaloes. In other miniatures this assimilation is quite evident because Mahīnvāl has a dark sky-blue complexion, a colour peculiar to the god, and he has a nimbus around his head, a symbol of royalty. Thus the romantic love of the two miserable lovers becomes the symbol of the love of human creatures towards the god and of the difficult and dangerous way to him. Cfr. M.S. Randhava and J.K. Galbraith (1969), p. 87, fig. 17.

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108. ḌHOLA - MĀRŪ

Marwar, c. 1820-30
Gouache, *31.3 x 22.3 cm.;*
32.4 x 23.3 cm. with border
Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz
Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin,
MIK I 5627

R. Weber (1982), pp. 564-567, fig. 117;
H. Härtel and J. Auboyer (1971), fig. 125b.

The miniature depicts Ḍhola and Mārūṇī riding a camel; they were legendary figures because of their sweet love story, the protagonists of a famous poem, which became the national anthem of Marwar (see V. Elwin [1946], pp. 371-405).

It tells about the marriage between the very young Ḍhola, the son of the Kachhwaha king of Ṇarvar (south of Gwalior) and Mārūṇī, the daughter of the king of Pugal (north-west of Bikaner), arranged by their parents on a pilgrimage to Lake Pushkar.

The young couple grows separately and Ḍhola, forgetting the old promise, marries another woman. Some wandering singers tell him about the love and pain of the beautiful Mārūṇī, stirring up his memories.

Therefore, he sets off to reach his spouse. After many adventurous events occurring during the young couple's return journey – the young woman dies because of a snakebite, but is reborn and joins her husband again – they happily reach Narvar, and Mārūṇī occupies her right place as the king's favourite. Ḍhola turns towards his bride, looking into her eyes, while she offers him a little glass of wine or liqueur, poured out of an elegant little flask. The man wears a long cloak held by a scarf over his shirt and trousers, and a turban tied with a big knot and rich in decorations; the wreath of flowers hanging on his shoulders indicates that the wedding has been celebrated; one of his hands holds the reins and the other a branch in blossom. Mārūṇī wears a *sāṛī* covering also her head. Two swords, a bow and a quiver appear from underneath the saddle. The camel struts with an elegant gait, bending its neck; the double stirrups are decorated with two heavy tassels.

One should notice how Ḍhola's face bears a close resemblance with that of king Man Singh of Marwar (1804-1834); *rājās* as well as nobles were often fond of impersonating legendary heroic characters in painting, just as they gave their likeness to the god Kṛṣṇa or to Rāma, thus aiming at taking over both a divine role and the human qualities of courage and strength shown by the two divinities.

A very similar picture to this, even though less elegant and expressive, was published in *Miniature indiane del XVIII secolo* (1977), p. 10, fig. 6.

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TRANSCRIPTION OF THE MINIATURES' INSCRIPTIONS*

8 (v)[1] mahārājya mādho syaṅghjī kī surati rāja baiṭhyā jadī kī (A.T.)

10 (r)[2] mhrājā bhīm sīghjī [*in another hand:*] ghoḍo rāj kuṁvar (A.T.)

15 (r) śrī rāvai rājā śrī chhaitrai sāl jī kī sabī khānai jān lo ghī pachadhai bā kī

18 (r) [d]i[t]īya rāga māla[kosa]; (v) 2 rāga malākausa

19 (r) mahārājādhirāja mahārājnā śrī jay siṅgh jī yaśa samudro utsarga kīdhō jad hemarī tulā birājyā

20 (r) rāvalajī śrī svāī mālhā siṃhajī koṭhare g(r?)a raṇa bā pa dhā ...âjīṃ kītora ṇa bāṃdabākī sabīssa ta 1866 kāmāsa agaṇ

26 (r) *Inscription on the top:* mhārāja dh(ı) rāja mhā rāvarāja jī śrī śrī śrī śrī śrī rāma sīgha jī; *script not very clear:* bu(m)dī ka ḍ(?)vāṇa(?) rāma sīgha jī; *on the right hand margin:* seva / ka dhā / bhāyī / rājeṃ / śrī k(r) / ṣṇa rā / m jī (*transcription by dr. Joachim Bautze*)

27 (v) śrī śrī māhā raja jī śrī māna sīnghjī nemu jaroka raṇa neā ya jo saṇa rāga kara govīdadasajī

28 (v) mahārāṇā śrī javān sīghjī baḍī catrasālī me bīrājyā (A.T.)

29 (v) *On the left above:* mahā rāwat jīśrī gokul dāsjī / udepur mahā rāja hamono / najar hau 1874 ra / asadh sud 1; *in the middle:* laṭ sāib kī a-swārī ri kau pānau /; *on the left below:* bāk sā / hakīm sāi / b rā (?) katar / kerī rāi

30 (v) *From the left:* mahīrā lālajī śrī valabhajī mārāja śrīrvajesurajī śrī kanaiyā lālajı rāma kusana rāja madhosīghajī

32 (v) mahārāṇā śrī javān sīghjī gadhyajı (?) padārya so śrī vīsanu caraṇā rabadārā(?) dasaṇ kartā thaka sabat 1890 rā pos sud 13 (A.T.)

33 (r) śrī māhārājdīrāj śrī mārāv chatarsāljī bādur savārī tīj sammat 1925.

36 (r) koṭa ka mahārawjī śrī saṭrū sāl jī sawārī gaṇgor kā gāṇṭa kī jawānī che

38 (r) āspur jī kī nom kī aswāri śrī māhārāw ūmed singhjī kī

40 (v) śrī rāmjī. pāno 1 śrī māhārājādhirāja māhārāṇājī śrī arasihajı rī surat ro noratā me āsoj sudī bīj re dīn ... śrī a(?) mātā padāryā jaṇī dīn ro pāno derā me bhese jaṭako kartā thakā śrī hajur ūbhā thakā ītrā saradār tathā pāsavān jīmaṇī sala ūbhā thakā [*in another hand*]: orī jamā pos vīd 12 sam 1818 vars/vīgat [*follows a list of names of those present in three columns and in the margin*]: kākojī bāgjī kakojī durjaṇ sīghjī bhese jaṭako kartā thakā bābojī bakhat sīghjī bābojī sagat sīghjī rāvat nār sīghjī bābojī mohokam sīghjī / dhāabhāī rūpjī dhāabhāī kīkājī dhāabhāī ūde rāmjī dhāabhāī jodojī khavās ratanjī kapaddār mān sīgh... savenī rām nejara rā kapaddār prohet motī rām taler(?) līyā(?) thakā...(?) darogo / [*illegible*] ...jī [*illegible*]... sal cavān nāthjī cudāvat bhīm sīghjī rāvat durjaṇ sīghjī kuvar samat sīghjī kuvar gopāl dāsjī paradān sadārāmjī rāvat sāī (?) dāsjī padyār amar caṅdjī saṁvat 1818 pos vīd 12 budhe kalamī cītarā bakhatā ro kī do thako vīle prohet anop rām re saṁbat 1818 asaḍ thī prot anop rām he... (?) śrī huo jaṇī dīn thī pāna sārā vīle prohet anop rām re(?) śrī hajur nījar huā / prohetjī / camardār sāhā amar dās depado(?) camardār solaṅkī pemā pānerī vije rāmjī solaṅkhī bhavānī dās... [*12 successive lines of names omitted*] (A.T.)

41 (v) śrī māharājadhīrāja māhārāṇojī śrī saṅgrām sīghjī vaḍī sabarat vīlās re darīkhāne phāg khelatā thakā jaṭhe jeṭhī laḍatā thakā jaṭhe sāmā rājā kīrat sīghjī bethā jhālo ajojī beṭhā māharājā pratāp sīghjī beṭhā rāthod sīv sīghjī beṭhā thākur īdar bhāṇjī bethā vīce kuar śrī jagat sīghjī beṭhā dāvī baju hājur pāchhe pañcolī rāo(?) caṅdjī beṭhā rāv bakhat sīghjī beṭhā māharājā takhat sīghjī beṭhā māharājā sudar sīghjī beṭhā tuar kīsan sīghjī beṭhā cuhāṇ jorāvar sīghjī beṭhā rāṭhod kusaloji bethā camardār tulsī dāsjī dhīkadye(?) rām sīghjī camar rakhato thako pañcolī m..(?) caṅd gulāl bīṭa peḍhyar(?) lāljī ūbho (A.T.)

42 (r) rāwat jī śrī suvāī kīsor sīnghjī

55 (r) huramā pātsāh kī 5; (v) huramām pātsāh kī

68 (v) mhārājādhirāja mhārānājī śrī sarup sīghjī goradhan vīlās sīkār bādī satāb bādī bīrājyā thakā... [*a long list of the names of the nobles, ministers and attendants is omitted here*]... sabat 1916 kā āsoj sud 12... (A.T.)

69 (v) mahārāja śrī rāja simhajī, rājasthān sāvar [*rest of the inscription with similar contents further on the right*]

70 (v) śrī bāḍī sīr gulāb holī ra khyāl māṅhai padārya: darīkhāno kī gho(?) jaṅdī ītarā ṭhākurā ro sāṅth śrī mhārāṇojī śrī sagrām sīghjī: jīmaṇī bāju rāv bakhat sīghjī: rāṭhoḍ pratāp sīghjī mhārāja takhat seghjī: jhālo dolat sīnghjī: rāṭhoḍ kīsan dāsjī: tuvar kīsan sīnghjī: bīca mai baiṭhā kuṁvarjī śrī jagat sīghjī: camardār tulsī dāsjī: camardār madhyā caṅdjī ubhā: ḍavī bāju: rāvat daiva bhāṇjī: mhārājā pratāp sīghjī: ṭhākur īndra bhaṇjī: cuvāṇ jorāvar sīghjī: sagtāvat syām sīghjī: hajur pāchhai baiṭha pañcolī rāya caṅdjī: dhāyabhāī

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* For the transcription of the inscriptions of the miniatures from London we are thankful to Dr. R. Skelton and Dr. A. Topsfield; for the others to Dr. G. Milanetti, Prof. R. Gnoli and Dr. R. Torella.

1 R = Recto

2 V = Verso

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nagajī: rām sīghjī: devajī dhāyabhāī: paḍyar lāljī: bāḍī jhālī bāvaḍī upare jāya (?) bīrajyā jaṭhe śrījī sāmu: mhārājā pratāp sīghjī: mhārājā takhat sīghjī: tuvar kīsan sīghjī: cuvāṇ jorābar sīghjī: kalāvat kāna: kalāvat cada: pīro ḍholakau hāthī pītābar baṅdho: holī ro sāg kalāvat kare nai nācai hai: [*inscribed below*] gulāb bāḍī cogān jātā jīmaṇi bāju rī (A.T.)

73 (v) śrī rāmjī. pāno śrī māhārājādhīrāja māhārāṇājī śrī arasīhajī rī surat... [*several words deleted*] huā thakā śrījī sahelya rī vāḍī vesāk sudī 2 re dīn varaṇa janī dīn rāte bhagataṇ ro nac karā ojaṇī rī sabī ro pāno cītāre bhīme cītāre kesu rām śrī hajur nījar kī do [*in another hand*] pāno orī jamā samat 1821 rā māhā vīd 2 bhomai jmā (A.T.)

74 (v) śrī. śrī māhrājadharāja mhārāṇājī śrī jagat sīghjī smat 1793 bīraṣai kātī sud 15 subha dīne re dīn rāsa: bīra jaroka radho: [*in another hand:*] śrī hajur rī gādī ūpar camanojī gādī tīr rāja rāghodevjī bābo tagat sīghjī bhāī nāthjī kunvar pratāp sīghjī bhāī bāghjī kākā bagat sīghjī..? sardar sīghjī bābo bhārath sīghjī (A.T.)

77 (v) *Inscribed on the back:* māhārājādhīrāja māhārāṇājī śrī 108 śrī sagrām sīgjī juvā khele chhe mīrāsu ūmrāv ūpare bedle rāvjī khāṅdaljī pālolī rāvjī pratāp sīgjī māhārāja sudra sīgjī kīte... jī(?) śrī lame salumar rāvjī kesrī sīgjī meto dīp caṅd tulchhī dāsjī chhavī kare chhai [*below:*] māhārāṇā sagrām sīghjī rī chhavī (A.T.)

82 *Inscribed on the upper, lower and left borders and on the reverse:* saṁvat 1777 re brasat lāva ūdai sāgar padhāryā so pāl ūpre ḍerā huā ne oṭā ūpre āt sakhadī karāī jaṭhe bīrājya ne bhasā gāḍ rā bākarā (?) oṭā māṅhe nhāvyā(?) so hajur thī tīrān rī coṭā kī dhī tāyā(?) pāl ūpre bīrājya sāṅjha re / vaku(?) vāgal ūda tīre tīr rī dīghī jadī ītrā ṭhākur hajur beṭhā ūmed sīghjī nāthjī rāṭhoḍ kīsan dāsjī kuar kīsan sīghjī puto ek āḍī beṭhā ne takhat sīghjī jhālo dolat sīgjī e ek(?) āḍī beṭhā ne solaṅkī / rām sīgh kamal rā phūl le sāmho ūbho ne pacolī lakhaman guḍhī ūdā vene oṭā ūpre ītrā jaṇā hajur thā ūmed sīghjī nāthjī rāṭhod kīsan dāsjī ne kuar hīsan sīghjī beṭhā he / mhārājādhirāja mhārāṇājī śrī sagrām sīghjī (A.T.)

83 (v) *Inscribed on the back (the inscription is smudged and water-stained):* mahārājādhirāja mahrānāṇjī śrī sarup sīghjī rī tasabīr ro pāno pelā jagamadar kā cyār cabacā... (?).. pralā(?) par jāḍa kā kaḍī ūpre barachhī vāvatā thakā jaṭhe atarā saradār pāsavān ḍhīkaḍya(?) hājar sāmā jamāī saradār sīghjī barachhī najar kare rāvat īsarī sīghjī kākā dal sīghjī jamāī īdra sīghjī phategaḍ rā ku: khumāṇ sīghjī bhāī sādul sīghjī cadjī ḍoḍye jorjī puvār devī sīghjī rasāluji cavāṇ hamerjī coḍāvat samaratjī ḍhīkaḍya ūdo paṅcolī akhe nāth morachhal ḍhīkaḍya umero (?) ḍhāla tara vār(?) lī(?)yā paṇerī gagā rām pa: haranāth prarāṇ(?) nāth pro jām nath ḍhī: tejo paṅ: padam nāth lo podhā: camano paṅ: vīsan nāth ju: joro kha: vīsan nāth sarīvālā ḍurjaṇ sīgh ḍhī: cubha luja lādāvat nad rām [*in another hand:*] hasa teyāḍe saṅtok dās orī jamā (A.T.)

84 (r) hāthī gaṅgā jal mahārānā śrī sangrām sīnghjī rī bār ro

86 (v) māharāṇojī śrī saṅgrām sīghjī nīcalī copāḍ re gokhaḍa bīrājya sāmo rāṭhod kīsan dās beṭhā pāchhe tuar kīsan sīgh beṭho gokhaḍā nīce bhesā laḍe hāthī ṭhāṇa baṅdhyo (A.T.)

88 (v) śrī rāmjī. sadha śrī māhārājādhīrāja māhārāṇājī śrī jagat sīghjī rī dhole(?) sode mi raṅge... mi surya cogān bīraṇe hāthya rī laḍī (?)huī samat 1803 rā bhādavā vaḍī 3 vaḍī re dīn...[*three lines concerning the elephant fight are here omitted*]... śrī hajur rā ghoḍā āge rājā mādo sīghjī ro ghoḍo pāḍyatī(?) bhāī nāthjī ro ghoḍā pāchhe kākā bakhat sīghjī ro ghoḍo joḍe kākā syām sīghjī ro ghoḍe nī pāchhai bābā bhārat sīghjī sīrdhar sīghjī āge samā u(?) khānāvat phate khejī pamvar(?) kanji ro ghoḍo kīlamī cītāro devo (A.T.)

91 (v) mahā rāj mahārav jī śrī umed sī(n)gh jī s(i)kār ḍoltā kī sanvat 1827

92 (v) ... koṭā kī pāno ā gatho... / rahimat singhji sāṭhākī / jī chitra singhjī rājāput / ...go... mandarāmjī vāran (o cāran?) bhopat / ma(nd?)hā bhāī uderām jī / ... singhjī rāṇāput... bhā... / san 1835. *On the right above:* ... nāhar kī sikār

98 (v) māhāranau śrī amar sīghjī nāhar māro ahīkalī re magrai [*in another hand*] je sīghot (A.T.)

100 (r) kātī mās; (v) hasa di?; *in another hand, more recent:* kātīka māsa/?3 murād bagas

101 (r) *On the top, on the dark ground:* veśāntaragate preyasi saṃtāpavyākulā proṣita bhartṛkā; *on the light ground:* virahaviditam antaḥprema vijñāya kāṃtaḥ punar api vasu tasmād etya me dāsyatīti / maricani-(ca)yam akṣṇor nyasya bāṣpodabindūn visṛjati purayoṣid dvāradeśopaviṣṭā /; *above the lady and on the margin:* sāmānyavanitā proṣitabhartṛkā

104 (r) śrī rāga kī rāganī / vasaṃta

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GLOSSARY

Aksaya Trtīyā, a festival celebrated on the third day of the bright half of the month of Vēśākh.
Ambā, epithet of Durgā.
aṅkuśa, goad for elephants.
āratī, worshipping (a god or an important person) with lamps.
Āsavarī, name of a particular musical mode.
Āsoj, *Āsvina*, month of September-October.
aṣṭanāyikā, eight types of heroines; eight powers of Durgā.
avatāra, incarnation of a divinity, especially that of Viṣṇu.

Bābā, *Bāpā*, lit. father; an honorific title conferred especially on the members of a branch of the Sisodias; also used for a religious personality.
bagh'nakhā, « tiger claws », used by wrestlers.
Baṅgālī rāgiṇī, name of a musical mode.
Bārah'māsā (*Baramāsā*), « twelve months »: a collection of poems, occasionally illustrated with miniature paintings, referring to the months of a year.
betel, cf. *pān*.
bhakti, devotion.
bhaṅg, an intoxicating plant.
bodhi, reawakening, enlightenment (especially in Buddhistic terminology); '*bodhi* tree' (*ficus religiosa*) under which the Buddha attained enlightenment.
brāhmaṇa, member of the priest caste.

Caitra, month of March-April.
Candra, (god of the) Moon.
Candra mahal, palace of the Moon.
cār'pāī, cot, « having four feet ».
caturmukha liṅgam (Hindi: *cār mukh liṅg*), a phallic emblem of Śiva with four faces of the god.
caurī, *cōrī*, fly-whisk made of the tail-hair of a yak, used as an emblem of royalty.
chajjā, deep eave.
chat'rī, umbrella; royal insignia; pavilion; a memorial in honour of a political or religious personality.
chaugān, arena for animal fights or sports.
citraśālā, picture-gallery.
colī, bodice, used as an undergarment by ladies.
cōpar or *pacīsī*, Indian game (played with dice and cowries).
cūb'dār, Master of Ceremonies; herald of the court, bearing a lance.

dar'bār, royal court, assembly-hall.
darī, carpet.
darśan, (lit.) vision, sight; appearance of a sovereign, etc.; audience.
Daśaharā, *Dussera*, Dushera, a religious festival.
daśavatāra gañjīfā, pack of 120 playing cards.
dhābhāī, foster-brother.
dharma, (divine) law.
dhotī, typical Hindu dress, made of a cloth variously tied on the waist and covering the legs.
Divālī, festival of lamps, sacred to Lakṣmī.
dīvān, Prime Minister (in a royal court); official; title assumed by Sisodia kings; long sofa without back.
dīvān-e am, hall for public audience.
dīvān-e khās, hall for private audience.
dōlat khānā, treasury.
Dol-yātrā (*Dolotsav*), festival in honour of Kṛṣṇa, celebrated on the full-moon day of Phālgun, in which an idol of the god is swung in a swing.

gaddī, (lit.) cushion, seat, chair; (part.) throne.
gajadhara (Hindi: *gaj'dhar*), expert mason, master mason.
Gangor, festival dedicated to Pārvatī.
gañjīfā, game of playing cards.
garh, fort.
Gauri, goddess (another name of Pārvatī).
ghagh'ra, long skirt worn by Rajasthani women.
ghat, stairs leading to water (a river or a lake, especially for sacred ablutions).
gomukh (*gomukhi*), pouch containing the rosary.
gopī, milkmaid, in Vaishnava cult the maid-friends of Kṛṣṇa.
gulāb'pāś, rose water sprinkler.
gulābī, liquor made from rose petals.
gulāl, red powder used in the festival of Holī.
Gurjarī rāgiṇī, name of a musical mode.
guru, teacher, spiritual guide.
gyān cōpar or *gyān bāzī*, « game of knowledge », « Snakes and ladders ».

haṅkavā, phase in lion-hunting in which the lion is driven towards the hunters with cries, the beating of drums etc.
Haritalikā, religious festival dedicated to Pārvatī.
hatyārā, assassin.
haveli, house of nobles.
Holī, spring festival (and of the Hindu New Year's Day).
huqqā, water-pipe for tobacco or dope.

jalebī, typical Indian sweet.
jālī, lattice-work, screens (made of stone).
jāmā, dress in the Moghul fashion.
jeṭhī, wrestlers.
jharokhā, small projecting balcony closed by windows or by stone lattice-work.
jōhar, suicide committed by Rajput women on the death of their husbands, particularly when their army was defeated by the enemy or the city fell to it.
juvā, gambling dice.

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Jyeṣṭha, month of May-June.
Kārtik (Kārrtika), month of October-November, in which Divalı is celebrated.
kaṭār, double-edged sword with hilt.
khāṇḍā, large double-edged sword.
khāṇḍā nāriyal, decorated mock-swords.
koṭhār, store-room.
kṣatriya, the caste of warriors.
kṣaya, obliteration.
kuṃvar, prince (also a title of honour).

leśyā, (generally) impure states of the mind; the condition of the karmic bond (according to Jainism).
līlā, game (especially of love).
liṅga, liṅgam, phallus, a symbolic form in which Śiva is represented.

mahārāṇā, mahārājā, mahārāo, great king.
mahīṣvālā, buffalo herdsman.
majūn, intoxicating sweets, with a base of *cannabis indica*.
mālā, rosary.
mālinī, a poetic metre.
mardānā, a hall or any part of the palace reserved for men.
mast, infatuated; (sexually) excited; it also indicates a state of excitement into which an elephant is brought before fighting.
mīr, sovereign.
Mīrzā Rājā, noble sovereign.
mohanīya karma, residual karma.
mṛdaṅga, double-headed drum.
muralī, flute.
mur'chal (morchal), fan made of peacock feathers, an emblem of royalty.

nautch, dancer, dance.
navāb, title of Muslim rulers or the rulers of a city.
Nav'rātri, « Nine Nights », a festival dedicated to Durgā.
nāyaka (m.), *nāyikā* (f.), hero, heroine; according to the classifications of Indian poetics or rhetorics, they are the ideal type of lovers.

pacīsī, Indian game (see *cōpaṛ*).
pag'ṛī, turban.
pahal'vān, wrestler.
pāmcāmṛta, five elements (of which the food to be offered to the god is made up).
pān, betel leaf flavoured and rolled for chewing.
pandal, canopy used for weddings.
paṇḍit, well-educated man, learned especially in sacred science, of the *brāhmaṇa* caste.
par'chattī, shed, store-room.
par'dā, curtain, veil, screen; harem, room of the palace reserved for women.
paṭ'kā, band of brocade tied round the waist.
pāy'jāmā, trousers in the Moghul fashion.
Phālgun (Thalgun, Phālguna), month of February-March, on the last day of which the festival of Holi is celebrated.
pich'vāī, background decorative cloth (especially for the images of Kṛṣṇa).
pīk'dān, spittoon for *betel*.
pīpal, an Indian tree.
pradakṣiṇā, ritually circumambulation of a cell or a temple.
pūjā, worship.

qanāt, curtain, screen.

rabāb, stringed musical instrument.
rāga, principal musical mode.
rāgamālā, garland of *rāgas*; collection of *rāgas*, where the musical composition is personified as hero (*rāga*) and heroine (*rāgiṇī*), expressed in verses and sometimes illustrated.
rāginī, rāg'nī, variation of principal musical mode, subordinate musical mode.
rājā, rāo, rāṇā, king, sovereign.
rāṇḍ, widow; prostitute (a word of disrespect).
rāṅgolī (dial. from *raṅg'vallī*), auspicious decoration made of coloured powders or seeds.
ratan, ratn (dial.), precious stone, jewel.
ratan cok, courtyard of jewels.
ravat; kuṃvar, prince.
Ravivaṃśa, of the family of the Sun.
rūmāl, piece of white cloth, handkerchief.

sādhvī, ascetic woman.
sādhu, ascetic.
śah'nāī, (piped) musical instrument.
sām'ghar, common dwelling.
śamī, white acacia (*prosopis spicigera*).
saṃvat, year in one of the two traditional Indian eras (which are in use still today).
sar'dār, nobleman, chief, a title of honour.
sārī, typical Indian dress, made of a long cloth with which the body is wrapped in various fashions.
satī, a widow who burnt herself on the funeral pyre of her husband.
sāṭ'mār, sāṭ'mārivālā, one who has the task of exciting elephants with a spear and fire in elephant-fights.
savāī, lit. one quarter more (than the others); an honorific title.
Sāvan (Śrāvaṇa), month of July-August.
śikāra, quarry; hunting.
śikāra kār'kẖānā, hunting department.
śikārī, hunter.
silah'kẖānā, armoury, arsenal.
śilpin, craftsman.
sir'dār, sar'dār, nobleman, chief, an honorific title.
sīsā, lead.
śīś'mahal, mirror palace.
sitār, stringed musical instrument.
Somavaṃśa, of the family of the Moon.
śrī, an honorific title.
śṛngārā, love, erotic passion, (also) poem or collection of miniatures pertaining to love.
stambhāśrama, smooth pole for athletic exercises.
Sūrya, (god of the) Sun.

tal'vār, sword with curved blade.
tān'pūrā, tambūrā, stringed musical instrument.
ṭappā, musical instrument.
tāūs viṇā, stringed musical instrument.
thākur, lord, master, an honorific title for chiefs or chieftains.
ṭhikānā, type of feudal estate.
ṭhikāndār, squire, feudal lord.

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tilak (ṭīkā), auspicious mark put on the forehead, generally with sandal paste or vermilion.
tripoliya, entrance to the royal palace.
triśūla, trident, a symbol of Śiva.
tulādān, donation in gold equal to the weight of the donor; (also) donation of gold made by the king to his subjects.
tul'sī, an aromatic plant, basil, sacred to Viṣṇu.

upaśama, suppression (of longing or desire).

Vaikuntha, Viṣṇu's paradise.
Vaiśākha, Vēśākh, month of April-May.
Vasanta, spring season; (also) name of a musical mode.
vazīr, minister (in Muslim states).
vīṇā, stringed musical instrument.
Viṣṇupāda, sacred footprint of Viṣṇu.

wazīr, minister (in Muslim states).

yantra, symbolic diagram; amulet, talisman.
yogapaṭṭā, scarf or lace used to maintain a given sitting posture in meditation.
yogī, ascetic.
yoni, female genital organ, vagina.

zan, (Persian) woman.
zanānā (or zanān'ḵẖānā), section of the palace reserved for women, harem.

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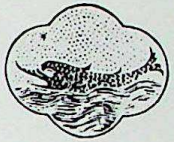

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